

**STUDIES IN
COMRADESHIP**

THEODORE GERALD SOARES

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STUDIES IN COMRADESHIP

From the New Testament

THEODORE GERALD SOARES



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PREFACE TO THE AMERICAN
EDITION

These studies were prepared in France for "Comrades in Service" of the A. E. F. The organization is being perfected in the camps, the leave areas, the ports, and in the army of occupation. It is concerned with the whole range of self-development and of mutual helpfulness. The vital name of the organization suggested the title of these studies. And is not the Bible the book of Comradeship?

While the studies were prepared definitely for the overseas soldier, they are addressed to him in view of his approaching return to civilian life at home. The problems which are discussed are not those in France but those which the soldier will meet as he takes up his work anew in America. It has been decided, therefore, that the American edition should be an exact reprint of the edition published in Paris. If there is occasionally a suggestion of an overseas situation, it will probably not be without interest in Bible classes at home, where the fortunes of the A. E. F. have been so eagerly followed.

It is earnestly to be hoped that the comradeship so finely manifested in the exigencies of war may find large place in the troubled and complex situations of peace.

PREFACE

These studies in comradeship from the New Testament form a companion and continuation of the studies from the Old Testament. In the latter it was deemed advisable to print the biblical passages, inasmuch as the whole Bible in good type is not always accessible to the soldier. But everyone has a little pocket Testament which he ought to learn how to use and with which he ought to become familiar. It has, therefore, been thought best in these studies to give simply the references to the biblical passages in the ordinary manner.

It is particularly hoped that the reading of these sixty or seventy great passages with the comradeship key of interpretation may give a certain familiarity with the contents of the New Testament that will lead to the daily use of this source of spiritual strength.

It is not intended that these scripture selections shall be studied minutely verse by verse. Let the reader rather seek to get the general thought and particularly to enter into the experience of the writer. If some little point is obscure, it may be passed by. It will seldom be found to interfere with an understanding of the passage as a whole. We are seeking in these studies to get general impressions rather than exact minute interpretations.

The course has been planned to cover eight sub-

PREFACE

jects in eight weeks, and has been divided into daily studies demanding about fifteen minutes of time each day. The weekly class is suggested as an opportunity for discussion of the questions naturally raised by the week's readings. The best results will be secured where these classes consist of small groups, so that each man may take an active part in the discussions. Naturally, endeavor will be made to secure the ablest leadership possible, but it is by no means necessary to have a teacher. Any one of the comrades may serve as leader of the class, for the best results will be attained by free and frank discussion shared by all.

Paris, Christmastide, 1918.

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INTRODUCTION

The New Testament is a book of comradeship. The innermost meaning of religion is the friendship of God and man. It is nowhere more beautifully expressed than in that picture, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." The Lord seeks the friendship of man, but he will not force it. He would join with us in the intimacy of our common life, but he cannot come in until we open the door. The experience of the great religious souls has always been a simple sense of living intimately with God. Prayer has been the conversation of friend with friend, faith has been confidence in the Great Comrade, righteousness has been the practical life of comradeship with other men according to God's will.

Another major note of comradeship that runs all through the New Testament is sounded in Jesus' first summons to his comrades, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." He invites them to be his companions in the great enterprise of getting men to become "Comrades in Service."

The establishment of the Christian Church was an actual experiment in comradeship. People undertook to live together in communities, practicing the com-

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rade duties, sharing the comrade ideals and the comrade hopes.

We shall read the great passages of the New Testament with this note of comradeship as the key of interpretation.

I

THE GOSPEL OF COMRADESHIP

The New Testament rings with the word "gospel," which means simply "good news." It is the good news that God wants to be comrade with men and to help them to be comrades with one another. The New Testament is the happiest book ever written, for the people who wrote it were all rejoicing in this good news and believing that it could become true.

The four books that we call the gospels are stories of the Great Comrade Life, which so vitally impressed all who felt its influence. He went about doing good, and that goodness was the goodness of comradeship. He spake as never man spake and his sayings were the principles of comradeship.

FIRST WEEK

THE IDEAL COMRADE

FIRST DAY. *His Comradeship with God.* Jesus never offered any argument to prove the existence of God. He simply knew God in intimate experience. In the beautiful story of his boyhood visit to Jerusalem (Luke 2: 40-51), there is exhibited that ardent religious experience that so often comes to an eager boy at the beginning of the teens. Note how confidently he speaks of God. A genuine boy may feel that God is very near to him.

Sometimes one knows God better at twelve years of age than ten years later. That is not because the childish experience was unreal, but because it was allowed to become obscure. Selfishness and self-indulgence destroy the sense of comradeship with God very soon. But Jesus preserved it. He felt a personal unbroken comradeship with his Father (John 10: 30).

He found the world, with its birds and its flowers and its beauty, a good place for God's comrades to live in. He entered into the joy of life. He achieved that extraordinary victory that so few men reach—that he was not afraid. It may not seem right to make such a suggestion to the soldier—surely he has conquered fear. But has he conquered anxiety? Has he escaped from

worry? Many a man uses up his energy in nervousness about the future. What shall we do? What kind of job shall we get? What if health should break down? Are there not all kinds of misfortune possible? Jesus refused to worry. He insisted that the business of a man was to go about getting righteousness done, believing that other things would turn out well. So, with a simple confidence in God, who feeds the birds and clothes the flowers, he lived day by day without a dread.

With a little touch of humor he said, "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." God who made us knows what we need. Read his experience as he tells it himself (Matt. 6: 25-34).

Of course he prayed. Prayer to him was conversation with his heavenly Father about all the problems of life (Mark 1: 35).

Jesus' confidence in God did not mean that everything would turn out pleasantly. Whoever seeks the life of comradeship in a world where there are so many men who are enemies of comradeship will meet opposition and persecution. But Jesus knew how to gain God's help in deepest trouble (Luke 22: 39-46). And when death lay before him he said simply, "I go unto my Father" (John 14: 12).

Jesus invites us to share his own religious experience. Can it be done? Can a man today live with God as happily and trustingly as Jesus did? Do you know some people who are actually thus living?

SECOND DAY. *His Comradeship with His Neighbors.*
Jesus was interested in the great human question, how

to be happy. The village in which he lived was not very large, but it was full of human nature. The people were much like Americans, Frenchmen, Englishmen. He discovered that the general notion of the kind of life that it was desirable to live was to be proud, self-sufficient, refusing to see the disagreeable, self-assertive, ambitious for personal advantage, severely insistent upon every man's meeting his obligations, self-indulgent and not too conscientious, ready for a fight with any assailant of one's rights, never champion of an unpopular cause.

These plans were generally followed in Nazareth, but they did not seem to work very well. There was ill feeling in the little town. There was a lot of petty cheating in business. There were jealousies and mean gossiping. The people did not seem to have attained happiness. Jesus tried the exactly opposite course. He has told us his experience (Matt. 5: 3-10). He felt that the humble, teachable spirit enabled one to get more out of life; that it was worth while sympathizing with the sorrows and mistakes of people, even though it made one sad; that the patient spirit was more gracious and more effective than the aggressive; that there is only one supreme need for man, and that is to be right and to get justice done; that the happiest thing you can ever do is to be kind to someone who does not deserve it; that only purity of heart enables a man to live self-respectingly with man and with God; that it is easy to get up a fight, but it takes great ability and self-restraint to keep the peace; and that if an enterprise is right it is cowardly to ignore it simply because it may be unpopular.

Jesus actually lived in this fashion at Nazareth. He found himself liking his neighbors, enjoying his friendly life with them, and so anxious to win his enemies that he forgot to hate them (Matt. 5: 43-48).

One day a man, fancying that he had some grievance against Jesus, struck him a blow. If there is anything that stirs one's blood it is a blow. Jesus said to himself: "If I strike him back we are equal. We shall have a fight. There is no possibility of comradeship. The foolish man is beside himself or he would not have done me this wrong." He looked at him quietly. The man in his anger struck him again. Jesus looked at him with the dignity of a great control and the man was ashamed. He could not strike him again. They became comrades (Matt. 5: 38, 39).

One day the Roman soldiers passed through Nazareth. They practiced at that time some of the harshness we have seen in the Germans. One of their practices was to lay hands on a citizen and compel him to carry the soldier's load for a mile. A rough soldier seized Jesus and put the pack upon him. At the end of the mile the regulation permitted the villager to return, but Jesus said to the soldier: "Friend, you have a long way to go. I am strong. I will carry this another mile for you." The soldier looked at him astonished. It opened up a conversation and Jesus talked to him about comradeship (Matt. 5: 41).

What would Jesus have done in the case of an assault upon someone else? Would he have been a pacifist? That is another question. We shall note his vigorous attitude against injustice later.

The young Nazarene settled the difficult question of

THE GOSPEL OF COMRADESHIP [1-3]

a true comradeship with women without the least difficulty. He knew that a man could not play with fire. He did not offer excuses for self-indulgence. He looked the matter straight in the face and recognized what manly purity involved. He knew that it was fundamentally a matter of innermost motive (Matt. 5: 27-30).

Jesus had a very high sense of self-respect. No man has ever thought more highly of himself in the dignity that belongs to human personality than Jesus did. He determined to make that standard the test of his conduct towards his neighbors (Matt. 7: 12). It works perfectly. All the respect, the generosity, the fairness, the consideration, the comradeship which one desires *from* his neighbors he accords *to* his neighbors. It is the great comrade ideal.

It is interesting that people do not sneer at the Golden Rule as they used to do. Even statesmen are talking of it. It is coming into our industries and into all our comrade life.

Consider what the working of the Golden Rule would be in a military unit. Consider whether we can take it back with us into our new American life. Can it be made operative among nations? Was Jesus right in believing that real comradeship is possible among men? Note that he proved it himself before he taught it to others.

THIRD DAY. *His Comradeship with People in Trouble.* We have noted that Jesus deliberately set out to know about people's troubles. It is much more comfortable not to know: "Don't burden us with the

sick and the hungry and the unfortunate; we have troubles of our own." But he believed that

"He who of love hath need
To love hath right,
He who of help hath need
To help hath right."

He had a marvelous power of healing diseases. There was not very much known about scientific medicine in Palestine in those days, so Jesus' wonderful gift of healing through the power of personality was especially gracious.

Much disease at that time had its basis in fear. They thought that it was caused by demons taking possession of one. It is easy to see how terrible would be the fear of anyone afflicted with a nervous disease if he thought the demons had got him. Jesus, with his radiant faith in God, freed the people from the fear of the demons (Mark 5: 1-20).

Sickness is so terrible a human affliction that people gathered from all parts to the presence of the Healer. He never failed them (Matt. 9: 35; Mark 1: 21-34).

Ministry to the physical needs of men seemed to Jesus to be an essential part of religion. He included even the provision of food when it was necessary (Mark 6: 30-44).

Every man who has been in the Army will understand this comrade spirit of Jesus. All that has been done by men to help their wounded comrades, all the kindly sharing of food and clothing and money with a mate, are part of that same human love.

The Young Men's Christian Association, the Knights

THE GOSPEL OF COMRADESHIP [I-4]

of Columbus, the Jewish Welfare Board, and all the organizations that have served the Army have so definitely believed that the provision for physical need and comfort was a supreme duty that in many places the whole strength of the secretaries has been turned in that necessary direction. No one would have had it otherwise.

Can we take this spirit of kindness back with us to America? Can we make it central in our religion as Jesus did? However much we may succeed in establishing justice in industry, in politics, and in all public life, there will always be a great deal of sorrow among men. But sorrow is wonderfully lightened when it is shared.

We are naturally moving forward to the removal of the poverty which is a disgrace to our wealthy civilization. We shall then be able to give up charity, which has always been unspeakably humiliating to its recipients, but we shall have plenty of opportunity for sympathy, for mutual help, for personal ministry to the sick, the troubled, the aged. Can we make our religion far more than it has ever been a religion of love?

FOURTH DAY. *His Comradeship with People Who Had Gone Wrong.* The moral weakness of men is more serious than their physical weakness. Think of all the wrongdoing that grows out of the desire for money—speculation, gambling, theft, betrayal of trust, falsehood. Think of all the evil in life that is produced by lust—ruined womanhood, broken health, the frightful ravages of disease upon the innocent, the pitiful army of the fallen in all our cities. Consider

the wrongs that men do as a result of envy and hatred—from the underhand slander to the fatal murder.

Jesus saw it all. It was just the same then as it is now. Yet he believed in comradeship. He believed that men and women could be won back from evil to good. He believed that good is more natural to men than evil. With a wonderful confidence in human nature, he was always expecting to save people.

When they brought to him the poor paralyzed man he read his heart and saw there sorrow for a wasted life. He first told him that his sins were forgiven and then healed him (Mark 2: 1-12).

Jesus believed that women who had fallen could be saved. He saw the harshness of men who have always most unfairly made the double standard of morals, excusing the man and victimizing the woman. There are two beautiful stories of Jesus' courtesy to such women. In one case he delicately helped the woman to repentance (John 8: 2-11), in the other case he recognized the genuineness of her sorrow, and told her that she was forgiven (Luke 7: 36-50).

When he was seeking twelve men to be with him to share his life and to propagate his teachings, he selected what would seem to us very ordinary men. They were fishermen and villagers. One especially held a small political office as tax collector, a business very much despised, and one in which petty graft and oppression were universally practiced. Jesus believed in the man. He was sure that he could win him to love righteousness more than he loved money (Matt. 9: 9-13).

The religious leaders wondered why Jesus did not associate exclusively with people of piety and of ir-

reproachable life. With that delicious humor that so often served as argument, he asked them: "What would you think of a physician who refused to visit anyone who was not perfectly well?"

Our comradeship must take account of those who have gone wrong. The natural tendency is to push them down. We have got to help them up. The fallen woman must be removed from our modern life. Shame on the man who takes advantage of her. In many cases she is feeble-minded and needs care. Often she is the victim of betrayal and needs help to get back into the right way. Sometimes she has fallen under the stress of poverty, and for that condition fair wages will be the remedy.

We must help one another to overcome the temptations of intemperance, self-indulgence, gambling, and carelessness about money—our own and other people's. Think of some practical ways in which we can set standards of public opinion that will help to keep us all in the straight path. Is there anyone whom you know who has gone wrong whom you might help to get on his feet? Perhaps he needs someone to believe in him and give him another chance.

FIFTH DAY. *His Fight against the Enemies of Comradeship.* Jesus did not consider very much the problem of political democracy, because the situation of the Jews rendered it quite impossible. Through foolish disputes and partisanship they had thrown away their independence. They were part of the great Roman Empire. That empire was on the whole just and it did secure peace in the world. There was nothing for the

Jews to do but to remain under the Roman power. Just as the British government of India must be recognized as inevitable for the present, so was it with Rome in that day.

But Jesus was an intense opponent of tyranny, and unfortunately a very definite tyranny existed within the Jewish state. Judaism was a religious organization in which there were two classes of officials: First, the priests, who ministered at the temple, receiving large fees, and who exercised a limited rule over the people. These Sadducees, as they were called, made themselves an ecclesiastical aristocracy. Second, the religious teachers, to whom was confided the task of interpreting the law and laying down all its requirements. These scribes and Pharisees, as they were called, made themselves a religious aristocracy. There was a tendency in both of these classes to lord it over the people and to exploit them financially. This tendency Jesus vigorously opposed. The one instance where we read of his using physical force was in his indignation at the financial exploitation of the people in the temple. Jews coming up from the country and from abroad had to have animals or birds for sacrifice which would pass inspection by the priests. They also had to have the Jewish money for their gifts to the temple. The shrewd priests had arranged quarters in the temple itself for the traders. There was even a story that the market in sacrificial animals was sometimes cornered, fat prices being obtained from the pious who were obliged to have the animals approved by the ecclesiastical officials. Jesus turned them all out, with a fine indignation (Mark 11: 15-18).

Throughout his ministry he was constantly clashing with the religious leaders, who were far more concerned with the details of religious observance and with the proper recognition of their own dignity than with the help that could be extended to the people. Jesus would bear any wrong committed against himself. His patience and courage enabled him to refuse retaliation. But when he found the religious leaders setting themselves up as better than the common people, trying to go off by themselves and save themselves, manifesting only contempt for those who were not so well instructed, his anger burned against them. In a terrible denunciation he summed up his indictment of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 23).

But Jesus was never satisfied with anger against the wrongdoer. He was always saddened by the failure of men to realize the glory of human service. Note how this terrible chapter ends in a sob. He had wanted to save Jerusalem. He had offered to lead the people into good and holy ways. They had turned from him with scorn. The leaders had considered his new religious outlook revolutionary and dangerous. When Jesus knew that he was right he stood for his convictions and refused to yield an inch, but he was infinitely sorry for the proud selfishness of the men whom he was obliged to oppose.

Consider the place that anger against wrong ought to have in a strong religious life. Can one be angry against a great evil without hatred and desire for vengeance? Have we not had a terrible anger against the wickedness of the Germans without a spiteful hatred of the individual German? Have we not felt

a sense of pity that a great country should have thrown away its opportunity to serve its generation?

SIXTH DAY. *His Acceptance of the Cost of Comradeship.* The comrade life is wonderfully winning. People will respond and join in and applaud. As long as we keep within the limits of general good deeds and kindly service we shall keep our popularity. No one will ever object to a program of good fellowship.

But if by comradeship we mean the establishment of human justice, if we mean the examination of all institutions with reference to discovering whether they are serving human need, if we unhesitatingly declare for the abolition of everything that stands in the way of the best human comradeship, we shall make enemies. Jesus made enemies. When he told the religious leaders that human needs were more important than the interests of any religious organization, they voted him a dangerous revolutionist. When he cleared the temple of the grafters who were making money out of the very piety of the people, the priests decided that he ought to be put to death.

Jesus was not a pacifist. He never advocated peace at any price. He advocated righteousness at any price. He definitely stated that he did not come to bring peace into the world but a sword (Matt. 10: 34). When Wilberforce advocated the freedom of the slave in the British Empire he brought storms of abuse upon his head. Garrison was killed for advocating human liberty in the United States. The opponents of corrupt politics and of vicious organizations do not bring peace but a sword. Jesus warned his disciples

that such would be the case (Matt. 10: 16-18). Sometimes a righteous leader in the very greatness of his popularity runs into opposition. For popularity is a most dangerous moral condition. It is very difficult to be popular and to remain a leader. The people want to follow those who go the way that pleases them. That is why the political leader is often described as having his ear to the ground. The Jewish people wanted Jesus to put himself at the head of a revolutionary movement. They offered to make him king and to follow him in a military campaign against Rome. He saw that the need of the people at that time was not so much political independence as inner social purification. It was not the Roman soldiers and the creatures of Herod who were their worst enemies. It was their own hatreds, quarrels, lusts. He wanted to lead a spiritual revolution. Refusing to be their king, he lost the leadership of the fickle crowd (John 6: 15, 66-71).

At last he saw that the opposition of the rulers would result in his death. He told his disciples that they must face the solemn fact that his course would lead to crucifixion. Peter vehemently objected. But Jesus told him that the cross is the law of life. A man must be willing to do right wherever it leads; otherwise, anything that he may gain is worthless (Matt. 16: 21-26).

If Jesus had escaped the cross he would have lost the spiritual leadership of the world. We have seen the same truth manifest in these stirring days. The greatest cartoon of the War was that in *Punch*, in which Wilhelm, facing Albert, says to him with a sneer, "So you see you've lost everything." "Not my soul," re-

plied the gallant Belgian King. In the dramatic turn of events it is the man who kept his word who has saved his soul and served his land and gained the honor of the world. It is the man who sold himself for pride who is the beggared outcast, with "none so poor to do him reverence."

Shall we dare to take the unpopular side for the sake of comradeship ideals? If the labor union is using its power unjustly, will the comrades within its ranks have the courage to condemn it? If the political party is playing a cheap game for success, will the men within the party be strong enough to rebuke it, and, if necessary, to cast it out of power? Will the men of wealth in America take the lead in developing fairer labor conditions and a real industrial democracy? Will the preachers and the teachers and the journalists be willing to say what they think upon the questions of human justice, even at the cost of support and of popularity? Shall we dare to oppose the vested interests of vice, even though we lose subscriptions to our charities and create awkward conditions in our politics and lose personal prestige and advancement? These are the solemn questions of the cost of comradeship in the coming days.

SEVENTH DAY. *Class Discussion.*

The Comrade Life. Once there was lived on this earth of ours the comrade life? We must never forget that. It is not a theory, it is not a dream, it is not a fancy of poets. It is a fact; it has been done. To be sure it was lived only for a short period, for the hatred of men brought that wonderful life to a

violent end; but it was long enough to show its glory. It was long enough to influence the whole world ever afterwards. If Jesus had lived for ninety years quietly and comfortably in Nazareth he would have lived more time, but surely not more richly. He said himself, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." His own life was full, rich, abounding. He tasted what is good, he enjoyed the wonder of living. He delighted in knowing and utterly trusting God. He refused ever to be afraid, for he was living in God's world. He entered into the finest experiences of human comradeship, tying men and women to himself with bands that no persecution could ever break and no length of time could ever weaken. It was great living.

Of course he paid the price of trusting men, for some men will fail. One of Jesus' own friends was a traitor. He failed with him, but he succeeded with so many others. He paid the price of a great devotion to righteousness by going to the cross. Why is it that every soldier is proud to wear a cross on his breast? Jesus transformed the cross. He did not think that he lost his life by dying in a great duty. One only loses his life when he saves it by running away.

The following questions are suggested for the comrade class:

1. What is the practical meaning to a man of living his ordinary life in the comradeship of God? Does God enter into our homes and business, our hopes and plans, our joys and our temptations?

2. When Horace Greeley was asked how it was possible to begin the resumption of specie payments,

he said, "The way to begin is to begin." In Jesus' time everyone was talking about the Kingdom of God when all people would be comrades. Jesus said "Let us begin it now," and he began to be a comrade himself. Is there any objection to starting the Golden Rule immediately? How would it work?

3. How much pain and sorrow is there in your town which could be removed? Ought we not to begin to remove it? Some of the sorrows of life are beyond our control. How can we share them by sympathy?

4. How much crime and wrongdoing is there in your community which is the result of bad conditions? How can it be removed? How can we win wrongdoers to righteousness? Consider especially your duty to the boys and girls who go wrong.

5. In the Great War we took up arms to destroy a great injustice. What evils are there in American life that must be put down by force? Can we put them down vigorously and yet keep the spirit of comradeship?

6. Are we prepared to pay the price of the comrade life? Consider what some of the possibilities of that price may be.

SECOND WEEK

THE PRINCIPLES OF COMRADESHIP

FIRST DAY. *The Unseen Comrade.* The most wonderful fact of Jesus' religious experience was that his own unbroken unity with God and his personal comradeship with men made him the one who could win men into the comradeship of God.

We all want to be sure of God. Reading the stories of Jesus, we wish we could be sure that the eternal invisible Creator has the same kindly, gracious spirit that Jesus had. Jesus *was* sure of it. He said to his friends, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14: 7-11). It is an evermore significant fact that there lived among us one who found God in himself and so could offer us himself as God. As a matter of ordinary Christian experience, when we think of God, we think of Jesus.

Jesus set forth as a fundamental principle of the comrade life that we should expect large blessings from the Father. He was always insisting that the difficulty with men is not that they ask too much of God, but that they have not faith to ask enough (Matt. 7: 7-11). The model prayer that we call the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6: 9-13) indicates exactly what we

should seek from God. It is a social prayer, bringing us all together into fellowship with our heavenly Father. The first petition is that men may reverence God, for Jesus knew how much is lost by profanity. The second petition is that justice may be done in the earth—the will of God. Then comes the request for the needed provision for the human life for the day, confident that God has a vital interest in all our needs. Then a petition for forgiveness for the wrong we have done, with the promise that we will likewise forgive those who have wronged us. The prayer closes with a request for help against the moral evil of the world. Consider how much we actually seek God's fellowship in all this range of interests. We all want daily bread, but do we all want reverence, righteousness, forgiveness, deliverance?

The great difficulty about our comradeship with the Unseen Comrade is that we do not feel worthy to meet him. He would see so much in us of which we should be ashamed. We sometimes think of him as harshly holding our sins against us. But Jesus said that such is a complete misunderstanding of God. He knows that we have done wrong, but he is sure we can go right. He is eagerly anxious for us to come back and to begin again. In order to make this perfectly clear Jesus told the most exquisite story that has ever been told on earth (Luke 15: 11-32). We must accept this for ourselves and we must be willing to accept it for others. The elder brother in the parable is presented as a rebuke to our bigotry, if we would shut any out of the love of God.

What Jesus put so beautifully and individually into

a parable he put also into the great universal message (John 3: 16).

Consider what prayer to a personal God, who is willing to be the friend of each of us, means in practical life today.

SECOND DAY. *The Comrade Test of Duty.* People often tell us that duty is simple. But we know that sometimes it is very complicated. Everyone knows that it is wrong to steal, but who knows what wages ought to be demanded and what wages ought to be paid and what prices ought to be charged? How difficult it is to know our exact duty toward Germany at the Peace Conference and in future relations. What is a man to do about this most important problem of life? Of course one cannot find his duty in the New Testament. It is a book of comradeship, not a book of rules. Jesus did not come to do our thinking for us. He came to do his own duty in his own day. We can learn from him the principles, in accordance with which by careful thought we may find our own duty.

Jesus met a very difficult problem of duty in connection with the observance of the Sabbath Day. The Jews had tried to keep it absolutely free from work of any kind. As that is manifestly impossible, they had developed a thousand technical points of right and wrong. This may not seem very important to us, but it was important to them. A man's standing and influence depended upon his attitude on this question. It was a good opportunity for Jesus to set up his test of duty (Mark 2: 23-28).

That last statement, in Mark 2: 27, 28, is the most

significant and far-reaching moral standard ever made. It makes religion and morality utterly democratic. The test of duty is human welfare and nothing else. The value of an institution is the good that it does to men and nothing else. You can test all the institutions of life that way. What kind of a family should you have? The kind that makes the best people. What kind of government? The kind that produces the best men, women, and children. What kind of church? The kind that is best for human welfare. What kind of factories? The kind that produce good men as well as good wares. Institutions are made for man, not man for institutions.

This statement of Jesus seems so natural, and yet men have not believed it. It has always seemed that laws, governments, school systems, church creeds, industrial organizations, are the great fixed things which man must fit into as best he can. But Jesus said that man's value is the fixed thing; everything else must adapt itself to that (Matt. 12: 9-13).

Of course something is going to break if one adopts this comrade test of duty. Jesus used a quaint illustration to enforce this point. The Jews were accustomed to keep liquids in the skins of animals. When they made wine they always put it into a fresh skin, because its elasticity would allow for the fermentation of the wine. Jesus said, "You will have to have new forms if you are going to have the new comrade principles" (Mark 2: 22).

This is a democratic theory of duty. Even God does not ask us simply to obey—he calls upon us to think, to study, to experiment, to find out what is best.

Consider how this may work (1) in politics, (2) in industry, (3) in the making of laws, (4) in the training of children, (5) in personal conduct.

THIRD DAY. *The Religion of Comrade Service.* Jesus had a wonderful way of going to the heart of things. Once a shrewd lawyer was discussing with him the question of what is most important in religion. Jesus knew the Old Testament very intimately. It is a considerable literature, with a great deal of profound religious suggestion in it. But he immediately seized on two great statements of the Old Testament and said that all religion was to be found in them (Matt. 22: 35-40). Comradeship with God, comradeship with men, there is nothing else. How simple the greatest things are! But of course it is always possible to quibble. Who is this neighbor whom we are to love? Jesus met that question after his fashion with a pointed story (Luke 10: 29-37).

The religion of kindly human service has been wonderfully manifest in France. Men have done things for one another such as they would not have believed possible. They never stopped to find out who a man was before they helped him, and they never measured what they gave. It was Jesus' view of life that such service should be offered in peace, and at any time, and everywhere. John the Baptist once wanted to know whether Jesus' religion was the final and best one, or whether there would be another for which they must wait. The Master offered the comrade principle as a test (Matt. 11: 2-5).

He was so anxious that men should not separate re-

ligion from human kindness that he put the matter into the dramatic form of a final judgment, in which he as king would judge the people of the earth. He said he would divide them into two classes—those whom God wanted as his comrades forever and those whom God did not want. The basis of the divine choice of men was their kindly service to people who were in need (Matt. 25: 31-46).

Consider what our religion will have to be if we are to come up to Jesus' comrade standard. Can we make all American life religious? What would we do with poverty and disease? What would be a religious home, a religious church, a religious city, a religious factory, a religious nation, a religious world?

FOURTH DAY. *Broken Comradeship and Its Restoration.* Our comradeship is broken by misunderstandings, quarrels, hatreds. Families are broken up, communities are spoiled, churches are divided, Christian social enterprises are frustrated.

Jesus insisted that we must properly estimate the evil character of anger and hatred. As a mere matter of law only assault or slander can be punished, but comradeship may be broken in the heart without any open act at all. Do we estimate this as strongly as Jesus did? (Matt. 5: 21, 22).

He went so far as to say that religion is mere mockery if there is unbrotherly feeling. We cannot have comradeship with God without comradeship with men. One had better stop his religious service, go off to his angry neighbor, and settle the trouble. The religious service after that would be a different matter

(Matt. 5: 23, 24). What would happen next Sunday if all of us followed this principle of Jesus?

He goes farther and warns us not to pray for forgiveness if we are not first willing to forgive. An unforgiving man must not pray the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6: 9-15).

Of course Jesus does not ask us to forgive people who have been guilty of definite wrong and are unrepentant. He does not suggest a lazy refusal to recognize the vital difference between the good and the bad. But we are to try to bring about repentance (Matt. 18: 15-17). An unworthy wife or husband, a spendthrift son, a dishonest partner, are not to be treated as if nothing had happened. But if we can win them back to rightdoing we have restored the broken comradeship (Luke 17: 3, 4). If they churlishly refuse, we ought not to seek revenge, but we may simply leave them alone (Luke 9: 51-56).

We must never forget how greatly and how often we have needed forgiveness ourselves. Jesus reminds us in one of his stories that our heavy debt of pride, error, selfishness, carelessness toward God should make us very considerate of our fellow-sinners who are guilty of some wrongdoing against us (Matt. 18: 21-35).

The question of forgiveness toward the wicked nation that has brought such awful misery on the world is very serious. Rulers and soldiers and women and children—they have hated all mankind and tried to injure them. We cannot forgive such a Germany. But we must hope for a different Germany. God wants to forgive them when he can. May we still pray for a comrade world?

FIFTH DAY. *Comrade Leadership.* We all want to be first. This grows out of the healthy instinct to manifest power, mastery. It is the basis of ambition, which has carried man on to his great achievements. When we say a man has no ambition, we have set him down as a hopeless case. Yet ambition is the most dangerous of human passions. Its growth in Germany in the last fifty years has brought the cruel war upon the world. What, then, is healthy ambition without pride and without selfishness?

Jesus faced this fundamental human problem. He had the difficult task of training twelve ambitious men to be true leaders in his great enterprise of making a comrade world. These men thought for a long time that Jesus was planning a political revolution. They were, therefore, very much concerned about their respective places in the government. On one occasion two of them asked Jesus to give them the two highest positions. The rest heard of it and were very angry. This gave the Master an opportunity to talk to them about comrade leadership (Mark 10: 35-45). He put the question squarely before them: Do you want to be a leader for what you can get or for what you can give? Do you want the salary or the service? Is it the honor you are to receive or the help you are to render?

George Washington did not want to be president; why did he accept the office? Why did he scout the suggestion that he be made king? Why did Lincoln wish to be elected president? Consider what kind of leadership spirit we need (1) in developing our cities in sanitation, good housing, improved playgrounds,

wholesome amusement; (2) in developing our country community life; (3) in meeting the new problems of capital and labor in industry; (4) in our churches and unions and clubs.

Evidently, as Jesus so clearly showed, the proud self-seeker will not help us. We need the leaders who will find their choicest reward in human service. And they must be humble and teachable if they are to be real leaders. The blustering bully who knows it all can get the leadership for a time, but he cannot help us. Jesus was very much concerned that the disciples should understand the limitations of such leadership, so he pointed them to the spirit of the child (Matt. 18: 1-4). One would not naturally think of a child as a type of greatness. Of course Jesus did not intend to suggest that all the qualities of greatness are manifest in a child. He meant to say that no one could be great who did not have the simple teachable spirit of the child. The men who know everything are very dangerous men. Look out for them. Do not elect them to office. Do not put them in charge of churches or schools. Do not let them lead in the unions or in the lodge. Do not pay much attention to their opinions. They are not good comrades, because they will not allow their comrades to teach them anything. They will not grow by comrade experience. They play the aristocrat, superior to us common folk who go on learning by experience. The greatest men have always been humble.

Jesus believed in democratic leadership. The great French motto is "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Is equality possible? In our Army sons of millionaires have done jobs that have generally been called menial.

In the stress of war cultivated ladies have scrubbed floors and washed dishes. In the huts men and women, who have servants to wait on them at home, have spent ten and twelve hours a day selling chocolate and cigarettes and making change, sometimes without much courtesy from the other side of the counter. We have all been equal in the War because we have all had a great duty. We have not all had equal rank, but we have all had honorable place. Sometimes the biggest man had the smallest place.

We shall never carry on a great civilization on the basis of absolute equality, but we can have the equality of comradeship. Jesus put it in a strikingly dramatic form on one occasion (John 13: 3-17). There is nothing menial when it is done in the comrade spirit. We need to learn in America to wait on one another. We need to learn the dignity of service. Courtesy makes any position dignified; rudeness makes any position contemptible. That is why Jesus was a real gentleman.

What do you know of leaders who have the comrade spirit? In your own ambitions for leadership, what are you really seeking to secure? Would you yourself be the kind of leader whom it would be safe for us to follow?

SIXTH DAY. *Eternal Comradeship.* Jesus said he came that men might have life to the full (John 10: 10). His own life was so rich in friendship, in good works, in great plans, in keen enjoyment of the best things, that he wanted everyone else to share it.

We have studied his ideal of a human comradeship inspired by love that would make living in this world

an abiding joy. His enthusiasm so captured his disciples that even when they were disappointed that he would not put himself at the head of the Galilean revolutionists they could not think of leaving him. They said he had the words of eternal life (John 6: 66-69). Jesus often spoke to them of eternal life (John 3: 16; 10: 27-30). It is the life that God lives. It is love (John 13: 34). It can be lived here, and it is so good and real that death cannot interfere with it. It simply goes on. Comrades with God now, we are comrades with God forever (John 14: 23). Comrades with one another now, we shall enter into an eternal comradeship that will never be destroyed (John 17: 22-24). Here we enter into the deepest mystery of religion. It is beyond argument. It is simply so intimate an experience of comrade love that we are sure that it is good enough to last forever. Selfishness, ambition, wealth, dignities, the pride of learning, all pass away. But love lasts. It is eternal. That is why Jesus is living today and we live with him.

Think about the kind of human life in this world that is good enough to last beyond physical death.

SEVENTH DAY. *Class Discussion.*

The Comrade Law of Love. We have been studying this week Jesus' principles of the comrade life. It is a life with a very simple, strong experience of the presence of God; it determines duty by what will do good to men; it expresses itself in human service, finding a deep religious meaning in doing good; it is sensitive to keep the comrade ties and to mend them as soon as possible when they are broken; it produces vigorous

leadership without losing genuine equality; it is so good that it lasts forever.

There is only one word in which Jesus' law of the comrade life can be summed up—Love. The world knows what hate can do; is it not time to try what love can do? Jesus offered it as the solvent of human problems.

The following questions may be considered in the weekly class:

1. What type of life is produced by the experience of the love of God?
2. How is the settlement of duty simplified by using the comrade test?
3. Could religious men unite in a program of human service?
4. What will the spirit of forgiveness do in a family or in a community?
5. What part may love play in leadership?
6. How far does your own experience of divine love and of human love help you to believe that it will last forever?
7. What is meant by the law of love?

II

EARLY COMRADES

Principles must be expressed in life. One of the dangers in our churches and lodges is that we allow ourselves to enjoy beautiful sentiments and then straightway go out and live as we lived before.

We have seen that Jesus first lived the comrade life and then gave the comrade teachings. The spiritual contagion of his wonderful life communicated itself to others. The New Testament presents us the picture of many remarkable lives transformed by comradeship with Jesus. We select for study the two most prominent of these early comrades as a kind of test of how the new principles worked. The first is Peter, the man especially characterized by his growing experience. He needed a great deal of developing, for he was full of human failings. The second is Paul, the hero of the Gospel, whose magnificent enterprise carried the message of Jesus through the world.

THIRD WEEK

THE TEACHABLE COMRADE

FIRST DAY. *The Sense of Unfitness.* The New Testament story opens at a day in the world's history not unlike our own. There were hopes of better things. To be sure, to many it was only a hope for independence from political tyranny, without much realization of the responsibility of such independence. But some men saw the turning of a page in human history and the opening of a new chapter. Such a man was John the Baptist, who flung out his challenge, "Get a new way of thinking, for the reign of God's righteousness is coming" (Matt. 3: 2).

Men flocked to hear the new teacher, and among them were four fishermen from Galilee, two pairs of brothers. Jesus himself was one of those who came to John and was immediately recognized by him as master. The fishermen, at the suggestion of John, followed Jesus, who talked with them of the new plan of world comradeship. He told Simon he should be called Peter, something equivalent to our name Stone-wall, the sort of man upon whom a great movement could rely (John 1: 35-42).

Peter entered into the comradeship of Jesus with enthusiasm and put his boat at his disposal. One day

Jesus gave him directions by which he and his friends made a wonderful catch of fish. Then Peter for the first time realized the mastership of Jesus. It made him afraid. He felt that he was not good enough for Jesus' comradeship. Suddenly seeing his own weak, impetuous, selfish character over against Jesus' strong consistency and goodness, he decided that the comradeship was too unequal and that he would not try it. Many a thoughtful man feels that he is not fit to follow Christ.

It is a good thing when a man is not too sure of himself. It is just as well for us to realize our unfitness. There is hope in a teachable man. Jesus said to Peter, "You know how to catch fish. Come with me and I will show you how to win men" (Luke 5: 1-11). So Peter went to school to the Great Teacher. He often made mistakes, but he learned wonderful lessons.

Consider whether we really want to learn to live the comrade life. Are we interested in making the world a happier place for folk to live in? Do we want to be prepared to do our part in the undertaking?

SECOND DAY. *Loyalty without Insight.* The Jewish people hoped that a military leader would appear among them to save them from the Romans. It was a very natural desire for political independence. Jesus, seeing the deeper moral need of the people, sought to lead them to a comrade life among themselves. Indeed, he may have believed that even the Romans could be won into the common comradeship.

Peter was attracted by Jesus' life and message, yet he was disappointed at the Master's failure to seek

political advantage. The disciples often wondered whether this teacher and healer and leader of men were the expected Christ. The time came when Jesus decided to challenge their loyalty. Would they accept him as their national leader? Peter unhesitatingly answered for the twelve that he was the leader they desired (Mark 8: 27-30).

It is a wonderful tribute to a leader when you accept his idealism although you do not understand his methods. The disciples were sure that Jesus was right. Even when others, who did not know him so well, gave up his leadership, these men, with Peter at their head, remained steadfast. They knew that he spoke words that could never die (John 6: 66-69).

Upon their confession of loyalty Jesus felt that the disciples were ready for the deeper truth that, as the world is now constituted, comradeship can be achieved only at the price of sacrifice.

Peter did not like this truth. It seemed to him pessimistic. He told Jesus not to think of such a possibility as a violent death. The teachable disciple was undertaking to instruct the Master. The cheerful optimist, with his eyes shut to half the facts of life, always thinks he understands the world better than does the serious man who may see impending danger. Peter cheerfully insisted that the comrade principle is bound to win. Jesus showed him that powerful interests opposed comradeship, and that those who really wanted to help the world on its better way must be willing to pay the price, to take up the cross (Mark 8: 31-38). Peter did not understand the lesson then, but he learned it later.

It is easy to follow a popular movement for the good of the people. Peter did this enthusiastically. It is not so easy to keep faith in a great idealism when it ceases to be popular. But Peter achieved this loyalty. It is very difficult to be loyal to a great comradeship when it becomes dangerous. This was Peter's test.

In our American life there will be some fine popular movements for better industrial conditions, better housing of the people, better recreation. We shall all join in them. As these movements go deeper and become concerned with more serious social improvement, they will be called revolutionary and they may become unpopular. Shall we be able to keep our faith? If they go further still and interfere with politics or graft or unworthy business or with some bad interest that finds its complicated way into respectable life, they will become dangerous. Shall we dare to take up the cross of moral reform and go forward?

THIRD DAY. *The Surrender to Fear.* Peter was no mere coward. When the time of Jesus' arrest drew near and the Master warned him that it would be a testing time for him, the ardent disciple affirmed that he was ready to go to prison and to death with his Master (Luke 22: 31-34).

He meant what he said. - A few hours later in the moonlight of the Garden of Gethsemane when the temple guard came to seize Jesus, Peter rushed out to defend him and struck one stout blow for his cause. But the Master knew that the time had come for a deeper courage than fighting, and told him to put away his sword (John 18: 10, 11).

What was Peter to do when he could not fight? He followed the guard through the dark narrow streets to the High Priest's house. He slipped into the courtyard and sat down by the fire, where he could see the trial as it proceeded. The feeling of a great fear for his Master, for himself, for all that he had hoped, was in his heart. Then suddenly he was accused as a comrade of Jesus. In the moment of terror he denied any knowledge of the prisoner. When again and yet again they accused him, he denied that he had ever seen Jesus. Then the lonely prisoner turned and looked upon his failing comrade. With broken heart Peter realized his treason (Luke 22: 54-62).

Did you ever give up comradeship through fear? Of course you never turned your back in a fight. Like Peter you were ready enough to fight. But could you stand up and confess an unpopular comradeship?

Many a man who really hated obscenity has been ashamed at the test to take his stand with the Comrade of the Pure Heart. Many a fellow has gone to places of which he was ashamed and indulged in practices that were hateful to him because he had not the courage to confess that he belonged to a different comradeship.

"Come on with the gang. Don't be a sissy." "No, thanks, I am going to write to my mother tonight." There was no yellow streak in that boy.

Think of this question: Have I the courage to stand for what I believe in, when it is unpopular?

FOURTH DAY. *The Restored Comradeship.* It was a bitter thought for Peter when Jesus had been cruci-

fied and buried that estrangement had come between them at the last. That tender, reproachful look of Jesus was the last that Peter saw. After all the months of love and loyalty, the comradeship was betrayed at the end.

Then came the wonderful experience of the resurrection—the renewal of comradeship. Peter realized that he was forgiven. The old friendship was restored, never to be broken again. The story of this experience is beautifully told in the Master's threefold appeal to the disciple who had thrice denied him (John 21: 1-19).

Once Peter had been doubtful of the desirability of the forgiveness of a wrongdoer (Matt. 18: 21, 22). But he was happy all his life to think that Jesus had forgiven him.

It is wonderful how often God forgives us. Jesus told us to pray for forgiveness, knowing very well that the prayer would never be inappropriate on our lips. "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done and we have done those things which we ought not to have done." We have spoiled the comradeship plan.

But the wonderful fact is that we can start again. Peter might have given up. He might have said, "I have disgraced myself beyond recovery. I have denied the Lord in the very moment of his greatest need. I have played the coward while he stood alone before his torturers. He went to his death with my betrayal in his ears. There is no hope for me." But Jesus wanted the comradeship renewed. He understood Peter. He knew he was loyal at heart.

Happily the Lord, who knows every thought and

motive of our hearts, believes in us still. He knows the best that is in us. He knows that we want to be good men. He has seen us respond to the comradeship ideals. He understands just why we failed and seeks to help us not to fall again.

Think of the blessedness of starting over again when you have made a mistake. Think of getting a new chance at the comradeship plan when you thought you had spoiled it altogether.

FIFTH DAY. *The New Courage.* When one turns from the gospels to the book of Acts one finds a new Peter. He is the same earnest, warmhearted, vigorous man, but what a courage he shows! He has gone through an experience that has made a new man of him.

He has become a preacher of the new comrade doctrine, especially insisting that the crucified Christ is alive for evermore, the ideal comrade of man. But this was dangerous preaching in the city whose rulers were responsible for Jesus' death. Peter and John soon found themselves before the very court that had condemned their Master (Acts 4: 1-21). The court was threatening, the apostles were fearless, the preaching went on. The new comradeship was growing in Jerusalem from hundreds to thousands. The Jewish Council determined to make another attempt to silence the men who seemed to be dangerous agitators. This time the apostles did not escape with a threat, but were given the cruel beating which was a common punishment in ancient times (Acts 5: 17-42).

They went straight from the beating to carry on the work which they had been forbidden to do. Of course

nothing was able to stand in the way of such faith, such courage. All that the Christian Church has meant to the world has come out of the heroism of those few simple men in those early days of martyrdom.

The American Revolution, which prevented a German king from playing the tyrant over the Englishmen in the Colonies, was just such an enterprise of bold spirits, who believed in a great political comradeship and refused to be frightened. The crusades for prison reform, for the limitation of child labor, for the abolition of human slavery, have all been undertaken by vigorous men and women who refused to be daunted.

The new comradeship of American life will have to be won by those who dare to say we must obey God rather than men. Perhaps we shall have such a popular education for comrade ideals that the leadership in the new movement will be taken by those in power. The removal of the liquor evil seems to be coming about by an overwhelming public sentiment. If we shall not need martyrs, we shall thank God for the readier victory. But if need comes, we must be ready to learn the great lesson that Peter learned.

Think of this question: How large a place does a fine enthusiasm for some good enterprise occupy in my life? Happy the man who has a noble enthusiasm.

SIXTH DAY. *The Conquest of Prejudice.* Peter had not learned all his lessons when he had conquered his fears. He still had to deal with his prejudices. Of all that hinders comradeship there is nothing worse than race or class or national prejudice. It was the German hatred of all other peoples and their insolent notion of

superiority that urged them to project the World War.

Never has race prejudice been more extreme than that of the Jews against the Gentiles in the early days of Christianity. The Jew felt that contact with the Gentile was a pollution comparable to that of eating an unclean thing. He literally abhorred relationship with other peoples.

Peter could preach boldly to the Jews, but could he have anything to do with the Gentiles? Sooner or later that question had to be faced if there were to be a world comradeship in the new faith.

God teaches us our best lessons in pictures. Most vividly the way in which Peter was helped to *see* the foolishness of prejudice is told in the story of the vision on the housetop and the visit to Cornelius (Acts 10). Note in this story that the appeal is always from prejudice to fact. It is not a question of whether a Gentile can be a good man. Look at Cornelius—who can deny that he is a comrade of God and of men? It is not a question of whether God may or may not receive a Gentile. Look at Cornelius and his friends—they are inspired by the Holy Spirit as surely as any Jewish disciple.

This world is a mass of prejudice. How few soldiers who have been in France really understand the French people, and how little the French people understand them! The Tommies and the doughboys sometimes misunderstand each other. Even the Army and the Navy have their different points of view. How difficult it is for officers and privates to see things the same way! What a problem of prejudice there is among us between the white and the black races!

When we go home we shall meet class prejudice again. Education separates us from one another. Wealth and social standing create barriers. These prejudices make the wars, the disputes, the unhappiness. They spoil the great comrade plan. How can we conquer prejudice?

Charles Lamb once spoke of a man whom he hated. Someone objected that Mr. Lamb did not know him. The genial soul responded at once, "Of course not; how could I hate him if I knew him?"

We do not know one another. We have our own little standards and think that all who do not conform to them must be wrong. It is time to realize that God knew what he was doing when he made a world. If he did not make everybody exactly like the people of New York, it was because he did not want everybody to be like that.

Peter got God's point of view. A good practice would be to take each type of person whom we know and ask concerning him five questions: (1) What does God think of him? (2) What admirable qualities does he possess? (3) In what respects does he surpass me? (4) What may I learn from him? (5) What have I that I might share with him? How would Peter have answered these questions with reference to Cornelius? Try the experiment on some persons against whom you have a prejudice.

SEVENTH DAY. *Class Discussion.*

Learning through Comradeship. We have studied throughout this week the character of Peter as a man who was teachable and who was able to learn a

great deal through his comradeship with Jesus. We have seen him manifesting at the outset a fitting humility, then learning to believe in Christ without fully understanding him, then failing in an hour of trial but deeply sorry for his failure, then getting a new start in a glad experience of forgiveness, then rising with dauntless courage to effective service, finally able to carry his work even over the barriers of prejudice.

We may consider in the comrade class the following questions:

1. How did Peter's recognition of the great difference between himself and Jesus fit him to become a loyal comrade of Jesus? Do we have any such experience?

2. How did Peter's desire for safety and popular success conflict with his desire for the comrade ideal? Is there any such danger today?

3. Why did Peter fail at the supreme test? How may men spoil the comrade movements of today in the same way?

4. What put Peter on his feet again? What is the difference between working for a dead issue and for a living hope?

5. What was the secret of Peter's effective leadership? How can we learn to become such leaders?

6. What was the basis of Peter's victory over prejudice? What prejudices stand in the way of comradeship today, and how may they be overcome?

7. To what extent do you think men are exhibiting the kind of discipleship that will enable them to grow into comrade leadership?

FOURTH WEEK

THE HEROIC COMRADE

FIRST DAY. *The Inner Struggle for Comradeship.* When we first find Paul he has a fight on his hands. It is that eternal fight within a man's own soul between what he ought to do and what he likes to do, between his ideals and his inclinations. "I know what is good and I find myself doing what I hate." It is a warfare between the mind and the flesh, between wisdom and desire.

How is that battle to be won? In the same way that Foch won his brilliant victory. He called up his reserves, he brought into the fight his army of maneuver. So Paul linked himself up with the great spiritual reenforcement that he found in Jesus Christ, and the mind conquered the flesh (Rom. 7: 14-25).

Paul's whole life was a continuous victory for the comradeship ideal, through the help of the unseen spiritual Comrade and against all those foes of comradeship that lurk in a man's own soul.

How this young Pharisee, who was at first desperately opposed to the new Christian preaching, became convinced that the crucified Jesus was living with God, summoning his comrades to follow him to victory, is most picturesquely told in the story of the vision near

Damascus (Acts 9: 1-19): It was again a triumph of the mind over the flesh. It was faith and loyalty to a great duty overcoming the pride of scholarship, the love of popularity, and the selfish ambition for dignity and ease.

Paul made the heroic choice, subordinating the lower desires of the animal nature to the higher ideals of true manhood. For him the choice meant the surrender of the joys of life, home, friends, fortune, profession, even physical safety, for the great cause of preaching world comradeship under the leadership of Jesus Christ.

We have to make the great choice. There are two kinds of life. The soldier knows what it means, for he made the great choice between the comfortable security of home and the dangerous duty of war.

That choice runs all through human life. It is selfishness or service. When we go back home the soldier can take the attitude, if he pleases, that he has done his duty and that rewards ought to be handed to him. He can cash in his patriotism. He can use politics and business for his own advantage. Or he can live as a man who has had a vision of what it means to live for a cause. He can determine that the soldiers who saved civilization are going to keep it safe. He can use politics as a way of bringing the comrade life into operation; he can use business as an effective means of organization for comrades to make and distribute the good things that we all need.

On the basis of your own experience and observation consider whether there are two quite different types of life among men. Can the difference be made still more

marked? Which type of life is the more attractive to you?

SECOND DAY. *Comrades in Service.* The Duke of Wellington said that the Church had its marching orders in Matt. 28: 18-20. The little band of comrades was to bring about a world comradeship under the leadership of the Unseen Comrade.

Paul received marching orders of the same character (Acts 13: 1-3). From that moment for the rest of his life, in company with a few comrades, he was sailing over the Mediterranean or pushing along the Roman roads in his tireless endeavor to form bands of Christian comrades in every city of the Roman world.

He organized four campaigns. The first was in Cyprus and Galatia, the second was in Macedonia and Greece, the third was in the western part of Asia Minor, and the fourth was in Rome. The story is wonderfully told by his friend Luke, a physician; one of the "comrades in service," in the second part of his book (Acts 13-28). The story should be read at a sitting to get its full interest and flavor. Take a couple of hours some day and read it through.

We shall select three parts of this narrative for study for the next three days. In the first campaign Paul went with Barnabas and John Mark, though the latter became discouraged and returned home when the trip was half through. They went to Cyprus where they won the Proconsul (Acts 13: 4-12). Then they sailed to the mainland and preached first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles in Galatia (Acts 13: 44-52). A serious condition developed at Lystra where Paul was

stoned and left for dead (Acts 14: 19-22). Happily he recovered and then sailed home with joy (Acts 14: 26-28).

The great work of the world has been done by heroic men who believed they saw something that ought to be accomplished, believed in it intensely, and used every ounce of power within them to bring the thing to success.

That is how America played its splendid part in this war. We got a vision of a great duty. We believed that the supreme need of the hour was the defeat of Germany. We threw ourselves into the enterprise with all our men and all our women and all our money and all our resources. In nineteen months we were able to offer our allies an assistance that broke the spirit of the Germans and compelled them to surrender. If we had been half-hearted it might have taken years.

That is how our transcontinental railroads were built. That is how the Panama enterprise was carried through. That is how our vast industries have been developed. We must learn to make spiritual achievements in the same way. When we are really concerned about the abolition of poverty, disease, vice, and crime, the establishment of human conditions for all people, and industrial justice in our great common work, we shall succeed in the endeavor.

Consider how much we shall need real heroes in the coming days for the establishment of our better American life.

THIRD DAY. *Comrades in Hardship.* A neurotic slave girl was making money for her masters as a kind

of fortune teller. Paul, who had something of the same healing power of personality that was so marked in Jesus, restored the girl to a normal state. She lost her curious gift of fortune telling, but she became a real woman—certainly a great gain. But not so thought her masters. It interfered with business. Paul and his friend Silas were seized, condemned without trial, cruelly beaten, and imprisoned. But they were wonderfully delivered and gained their rude jailer as a Christian comrade (Acts 16: 16-40).

Comradeship must not interfere with business. That is going to be one of our dangers. When they were trying out a scheme for saving criminals in Cleveland someone objected, "But will you make any money?" The answer was shot back, "We shall make men."

It is hard to save the slave girls in our American cities because their wicked owners are in league with the politicians, and vast amounts of money are involved.

When comradeship interferes with business there will be trouble. But if comradeship is carried through in American life, it may interfere tremendously with business.

There are many wealthy men who are heroic enough to say that they do not care about dividends or anything else if so be that we can secure a better comradeship in our industries. The increase in the number of these men is the great hope in America.

But most of us who are not rich are timid. We are afraid to disturb anything. We have not Paul's religious faith that it is always right to look at the human interests.

There was a great victory at Philippi. To be sure

the apostles suffered a terrible beating. But they won the jailer. And next day the magistrates had to come with many apologies and beg them to go free.

We have believed that God was on the side of human freedom in the Great War. Let us believe that God is on the side of human freedom in the development of a comrade society. It may be dangerous. But let us dare to be heroic.

Think of this question: If a vigorous effort to secure comrade life is undertaken in your town, will it interfere in any way with business? If it will, how may the business be made secondary to the human need?

FOURTH DAY. *Comrades in Shipwreck.* Acts 27 contains the most vivid story of a shipwreck in ancient literature. It was written by Luke the physician, who was one of Paul's comrades on the voyage. It is evident that it comes from an eye witness of the stirring events. You can see the whole series of incidents as in a moving picture.

Paul had been arrested by the authorities in Palestine, and after many tedious legal delays caused by the timidity of the Roman Governor he had appealed to the Supreme Court in Rome. Very anxious that it should not be decided that the preaching of the Christian faith was illegal, he had resolved to secure a decision from Rome.

It was on the voyage to the capital as an appellant to the Supreme Court that the shipwreck occurred. It is to be noted that a prisoner being sent to Rome on appeal from the provincial court would have certain distinctions. He would not be treated like the ordinary

criminals who were being taken to the capital in order to be used as victims in the arena, fighting with wild beasts or with gladiators. However, the unusual respect shown by the centurion was a recognition of Paul's extraordinary personality.

A man's character comes out in trying circumstances. Note how this landsman is a leader even at sea. The story brings out his courage, his poise, his shrewd watchfulness as when he prevented the cowardly sailors from getting off in the boats, his common sense in urging the passengers to take food. Mark the graphic touch that even on the slippery deck in the storm Paul quietly offered thanks before eating. That was coolness in danger.

Soldiers and sailors in the Great War have seen men like Paul. They come to the front in the crisis. Such a man was the sergeant in the German prison camp who organized his comrades, withstood the German propaganda, and compelled even the brutal guards to mitigate their treatment.

We need men like that and we ought to be glad to follow them. Let any one of us thank God if he has such a gift of leadership.

The danger is that in private life a man will use these splendid abilities merely for his personal advantage. They seem to him to be his capital, which he can employ as he pleases. He will try to get on in business, forgetting about his comrades who are less able than himself. He will go into politics and push himself for office, falling easily into the ways of the politician, and forgetting that government is only to be thought of as a matter of securing public welfare. If he rises to

leadership in a labor union, he will be beset by temptation to secure personal advantage at the cost of the interests of his group. If he conquers the ordinary vulgar temptation of bribery he will still meet the more subtle temptation of seeking leadership of a special class, instead of trying to bring that class into the great comradeship of the national life. In a word, there is the perpetual danger of cashing in one's abilities instead of consecrating them.

Again the great question arises, Will the brave men who have been so true to comradeship in the stress of war be brave enough and unselfish enough to enter into the long campaign of comradeship in peace? Paul was a true comrade in the shipwreck because he played the generous unselfish part everywhere. The spirit of his life was, "Where can I lend a hand?" Are you going back to America to see what you can get or to see what you can give? Are you going to try and save yourself, or will you believe with Paul, "God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee"?

How remarkable it is that we find this comradeship ideal on almost every page of the Bible!

FIFTH DAY. *Comrades in Prison.* Paul had to wait many months before his case came before the Supreme Court. He was allowed to hire a lodging, but was constantly under the guard of a Roman soldier, to whom he was chained, a light chain attaching the wrist of the one to that of the other.

Paul was not a man to waste time. He made his little lodging the headquarters of a great enterprise, sending his lieutenants out to the churches which had

been established, writing letters where more extended communication was needed, receiving messages from the churches, holding discussion with those who sought further knowledge of the new faith. And when he had nothing else to do he could always preach to his guard. He says he preached in that way to a whole regiment of soldiers (Phil. 1: 13).

One day a young man came to Paul's lodging. He was in trouble. He had been having his fling in the big city, had spent all his money, and was afraid to face the consequences. By some strange coincidence the young man had found Paul. His name was Onesimus, and he was a slave belonging to Paul's friend Philemon, a wealthy Christian of the city of Colossæ. It seemed that the slave had taken money from his master, had run away, had made his way to the great city as young men will, and had spent all he had in folly. The punishment of a slave for running away was terribly severe and the robbery would, of course, add materially to the offense.

The old veteran and the young runaway talked together. They became comrades. Paul's big heart understood the boy, who in turn was happy to find someone whom he could trust. Onesimus saw the foolishness of profligacy and was won to the ideal of Christ. He wanted to join Paul as a helper in the comrade enterprise.

Paul needed a vigorous young assistant like Onesimus, but there was a wrong that had to be righted. We must remember that slavery was the ancient system of labor. Nobody had thought that it could be supplanted by any better system. Onesimus had been brought up by

Philemon and had broken the law by running away. Moreover, he had committed the crime of robbery. Paul told him that the wrong must be put right. No one can become a disciple of Christ and leave an old wrong unsettled.

Naturally Onesimus was afraid to go back to his master, even though he knew him to be an honorable Christian man. Paul told him not to worry about it, as he would write Philemon a personal letter.

The kindly courteous note that Paul sent by the hand of his new found friend was so much cherished by Philemon that he read it to the church; copies were made of it and distributed, and it found its way at last into the collection of Christian writings that we call the New Testament.

Read the brief letter as an example of comrade correspondence. Here was a big man with great affairs on his mind, with his own case that involved his life awaiting trial, but he had time to save a young fellow who was going the wrong way, and to establish a real comradeship between the employer and the servant. The miserable fraud and flight were made an opportunity for forgiveness and friendship.

Consider how many incidental ways of doing good and of making comradeship are afforded in the ordinary course of our common life. Are our eyes open to see the opportunities when they come? Are we interested enough to take advantage of them, even when they involve some trouble and expense?

SIXTH DAY. *Comrades to the End.* The old proverb says that a friend in need is a friend indeed. It is

very happy to find comrades when one is in trouble. It is correspondingly bitter to be forsaken by one's friends when that friendship becomes costly to them. Paul was to be tried for his life. It was not popular to be the comrade of a political prisoner. It happened that when the first hearing of his case came up he had not a single friend in Rome. He wrote about it to his intimate companion Timothy, telling him that the Unseen Comrade was there and the lonely prisoner had felt safe even before Nero (II Tim. 4: 16-18). But while some turned away from Paul, fearful for their own safety, some took the first opportunity of a visit to Rome to find out his lodging. They were not ashamed of their old friend, if he did wear the chain of the prisoner (II Tim. 1: 15-18).

Paul was impressed by that grim soldier who shared his lodging. The lot of the soldier has never been an easy one. Paul wrote to Timothy, "We must be soldiers. We must endure hardship." The comradeship campaign demanded hardship in those days (I Tim. 1: 18; II Tim. 2: 3).

Paul was right to get a lesson from soldiers. How splendidly they do the hard tasks and stand by one another and remain faithful to the end! So great have been the soldier virtues that William James felt inspired some years ago to write an essay on "The Moral Equivalent of War." He was concerned that we should get the warrior heroism in the life of peace.

As the end drew near and Paul knew that he would not be acquitted, he was very anxious to see Timothy once more. Most of his helpers were away on the business of the Gospel, and some, as we have seen, were

afraid to come to him. The faithful Luke, the physician, was with him. But he wanted Timothy and also Mark, who had once failed him. How personal the request sounds (II Tim. 4: 9-13, 21). But the earthly comradeships were nearly over for the old hero. The battle was done. The race was run. There was another Comrade who never fails. Confidently Paul looked to the victorious ending of a life that had been spent in the service of men. He knew that such a life would be crowned with victory (II Tim. 4: 6-8).

Can we be comrades to the end? Can we stay by what we believe in wherever it leads? If so, we may be sure there is another comradeship beyond the end, a life into which we may take all that is best in this.

SEVENTH DAY. *Class Discussion.*

The Heroism of Comradeship. We have been studying this week one of the greatest lives ever lived on earth. There have been few heroes comparable with Paul. We have seen him first conquering himself in the comradeship of Jesus. Then we have seen him with the most daring courage going forth with a few comrades to win the world. We have seen him facing hardships, imprisonment, shipwreck. We have seen him turning every circumstance into opportunity, even a prison into a workshop, and carrying on his comrade purpose to the end.

The class of the comrades in service might consider these questions:

1. Why must a man conquer himself before he can play a worthy part in the world? How can it be done?
2. Is there really a comrade enterprise today to which

a man may give his life, either as a definite calling or in connection with his regular business?

3. Are there any hardships to be faced today?

4. Is the comrade enterprise likely to be dangerous? What tendencies indicate that it may, and what tendencies indicate that it may not? What about our duty in the matter?

5. Is this comrade enterprise real enough and good enough so that we can win men personally from the self-indulgent or even the profligate life to an enlistment for service?

6. What are we going to do about the timid folk who are afraid of unpopularity or danger? Can we go on without them?

7. Has not the roll of honor of our comrades who fell in the War helped us to estimate more deeply the value of heroism and to believe more confidently in the victory beyond death?

III

AN EXPERIMENT IN COMRADESHIP

The early Christian Church was an experiment in comradeship. Inspired by the leadership of Jesus and by the presence of the Spirit, good men and women joyfully undertook to live as Jesus had lived. Peter in summing up the Master's way said of him, "He went about doing good" (Acts 10: 38).

The gospels deal with the words and deeds of Jesus; the remainder of the New Testament reveals the life of the Christian comrades in which the experiment of comradeship was being carried on.

FIFTH WEEK

THE CHURCH AS A COMRADESHIP

FIRST DAY. *The Unseen Presence.* Cardinal Newman says that the Roman Empire was conquered by the Christian Church because that mighty power, with all its imperial resources, was obliged to yield to the spiritual power that was founded on a mere sense of the unseen. Every page of the New Testament reveals that the people who called themselves after the name of Christ were triumphantly conscious of inner resources, of a Personal Presence that was almighty to do for them everything of which they had need.

Read the eighth chapter of Romans right through, without stopping to question any of its profound statements. Just try to get the experience of the man who wrote it. Remember that it comes after the chapter which we have studied in which Paul tells the story of his inner struggle for freedom. Note in his Christian experience the vital sense of God. The chapter is not an argument. It is not an attempt to answer the objections of those who found it difficult to believe in God. It is a joyous declaration of confidence that behind and above and beneath everything is a personal God.

Those early Christians were not dismayed by the fact

that the great Comrade Jesus Christ had been crucified. They believed that he was victor over the cross and over the grave and that he was their leader still. Note how this exultant chapter expresses a confidence in the living Christ. Paul is talking to his friends of one whom he intimately knew.

Moreover, Christ as the victorious Son of God is the promise to us that we, too, are the sons of God. We have the same Spirit that he had. We are heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Everything that God has for him he has for us. Consider how real this made the comradeship of God the Father, and of Jesus Christ the Elder Brother.

But there was an even deeper experience of the Unseen Presence. One could be so identified with Christ that the very Spirit of God which inspired and guided him would inspire and guide the disciple. It is this most intimate divine comradeship which the early Christians called the Holy Spirit.

Note how this chapter is filled with the thought of the presence of the Spirit of God: God known and felt in the experience of everyday life; God enlightening conscience, purifying motive, stimulating faith, strengthening the will to overcome evil. This is the Holy Spirit of God. The eternal God of the universe is spiritually real to the individual human soul.

Consider what it meant to Paul, to the early Christians, and what it may mean to us, to live with such a joyous confidence that God is our constant comrade.

SECOND DAY. *Comrade Communities.* Such a faith as that which we have been studying is inevitably con-

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tagious. What wonder that comrade communities were formed in Jerusalem and in the other cities of Palestine and of Syria, and then through the Roman world.

The story of the spread of this joyous faith in Jerusalem is told in Acts 2: 41-47; 4: 32-35. It is interesting to note that the enthusiasm was at first so great that a kind of communism of property prevailed. This, however, did not prove very successful.

The comradeship soon began to break through old prejudices. The Jews and the Samaritans were on very bad terms, but the Gospel was carried into Samaria with great joy (Acts 8: 4-8).

As we have already noted in the case of Jesus, of Peter, and of Paul, the comrade gospel aroused antagonism. So these early disciples were driven from place to place. But it was like scattering seed. Wherever they went they formed new comrade communities. The establishment of the important center at Antioch is particularly interesting, as it was there that the disciples were first called Christians (Acts 11: 19-26). The name may have been given at the outset in derision. It has become the greatest comrade name on earth.

Similar Christian communities were established in all the great cities. We have Paul's letters to the comrades at Colossæ in Asia Minor (Col. 1: 1-4), to the Philippians and the Thessalonians in Macedonia (Phil. 1: 1-6; I Thess. 1: 1-3), to the Corinthians in Greece (I Cor. 1: 1-3), and to those in many other places.

Consider what it must have meant to have these groups of people forming themselves all over the world, propagating a faith that God was the friend of men ready to save them from all evil. Can we regain this

enthusiasm in the faith that God is waiting to give the world a new blessing today?

THIRD DAY. *The New Life.* It was not only the joy and confidence of the comrades in the new communities that impressed the world. It was the new and better life that they lived. Religion with them was a very definite endeavor to do good and to be good (James 1: 27). To come into comradeship with Christ meant an absolute break with the old heathen life. To be in Christ was to be a new creation (II Cor. 5: 17).

When Paul writes to his friends at Ephesus, he tells them that Christian discipleship means a stripping off of old habits and a putting on of new ones (Eph. 4: 17-24).

It is evident that those old habits were such as men have acquired in every age. The sins of the flesh come first, for the appetites are so insistent. The new life in Christ meant the control of appetite. It always means that. It is the hall-mark of the unseen comradeship. Then follow falsehood, dishonesty, foul speech, and the many manifestations of anger. All these were to be resolutely cast aside. In the place of these evil habits there can be substituted good healthy practices, imitating God himself, the loving, forgiving Comrade, whose children we are.

It is especially interesting to notice how they overcame the temptation to drunkenness (Eph. 5: 18-20). A man drinks liquor because he wants variety from the dullness of a common life. One of our soldiers said that he went to the wine room because there was nowhere else to go. Alcoholic stimulation transports one

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for a time into a happy world. But one can get the same joyous experience with a good sing. Enthusiastic song will transport one into a world of new delight. The Christian comrades of the first century carried on something of the same program of healthy enthusiasm that we have had in the huts in France.

Consider what radical moral changes in a man's life the ideals of comradeship demand.

FOURTH DAY. *The Comrade Way.* It was a way of living. It was the comrade way of life. Jesus had already told his friends that he was the way (John 14: 6). So they walked about their daily affairs in Jesus' way.

The new faith was not thought of as a new religion, for it was just the old faith of the Hebrew prophets and of the psalmists. But it was a new way of living for the people who were joining the new comrade communities; and it came to be called "The Way" (Acts 19: 9, 23; 24: 22).

Of course there was constant danger of men falling back into their old habits. So the most vigorous efforts were made to preserve the purity of the comrade way.

Paul was so enthusiastic about the better way of living that he insisted that a man could actually kill his old life and get a new one. We may, as it were, crucify our old bad habits and come into a new life, even as Christ died for us and now lives for us (Rom. 6: 1-11).

"Kill your bad habits" is not a bad slogan. Walk about with a new set of ways, kindly comrade feelings one toward another, hearty thankfulness for the good life which it is open to us to live, the singing spirit

which is ever the conquering spirit, following Christ always as leader in the good way (Col. 3: 5-17).

Are there two different ways of living in the world? That is not to say that all men may be divided into the good and the bad. None of us is either good or bad. We are all very much of both. But are there not two very distinct trends—the one the way of the comrade life, seeking purity, honesty, justice for all men, the happiness of the world, the other the way of the selfish, self-indulgent life that does not care?

Is there not a Jesus way of living in the world and a way that is not his?

FIFTH DAY. *The Comrade Motive.* How is one to know that he is in the comrade way of life? There was no doubt upon this point in the New Testament days. "We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren" (I John 3: 14). "Everyone that loveth is begotten of God" (I John 4: 7). It was a selfish world in those days, as it has always been, but the report goes that the heathen looked upon the Christian comrades with surprise and said, "How these Christians love one another!"

They had to love one another—there was nothing else to do. They were in danger from their neighbors and from the Government. Naturally they drew together and helped one another, bearing one another's burdens (Gal. 6: 2). It made a very beautiful life. Of course it was not perfect. There was constant danger of bad feeling, selfishness, ambition, quarrelling, spoiling the good comradeship. Many of the leaders, therefore, were concerned to present with great earnestness the

supreme necessity of the love motive as the characteristic of the comrade way (I John 3: 14-24; 4: 7-21).

The Church ought to be a community of people who love God and love one another and are seeking to make the love motive dominant in the world. "Comrades in Service" ought to be a group of men who love their country and their homes and one another, and are seeking the expression of comradeship in daily life. The labor union ought to be a community of men of the same occupation who love one another and are seeking to bring the love motive into human industry. The League of Nations ought to comprise the peoples of the earth who love one another and are seeking to bring about a world society through the love motive.

Is this all very hopeless dreaming? Is love too strong a word? We have seen what hatred can do among nations in Germany's conduct of the War, what hatred can do between classes in the pitiful condition of Russia. It might not be very unpractical to see if the opposite motive will not work better.

Love is not incompatible with honest difference of opinion. The New Testament leaders did not agree by any means. But they worked out their differences in good spirit.

Love is not incompatible with the execution of justice. It is not real love if it does not include justice. Love is the unselfish desire for the highest good of other people. It may include their discipline. The severe exaction of full reparation from Germany may be coupled with an earnest desire that the people may learn how to come into the family of nations and achieve a prosperity which shall not be at the cost of

their neighbors. There is no more serious test of comradeship before us than such a treatment of Germany as shall do justice to her victims and shall not be characterized by the spirit of revenge.

We do not naturally use the word *love* except in our more intimate relations. Think of John's use of the word and see if it may express a genuine motive in all the relationships of our lives. Is it anything more than comradeship after all?

SIXTH DAY. *The Comrade Meal.* Real comrades eat together. Partaking of common food is a tie that binds us as few other experiences do. The word *companion* means him with whom we break bread. The soldiers knew what it meant in France to share the common meal, sometimes the comfortable mess, sometimes the less inviting "corn willy," and sometimes anything that might be available to keep from sheer hunger. But it was always a comradeship.

The early Christians attached a peculiar significance to the meal of which they partook together. They remembered that the last meeting of Jesus with his disciples had been at a supper. He had told them that he would be their comrade whenever they broke bread together. So they had great joy in their common meal (Acts 2: 42, 46, 47).

In the church at Corinth an unhappy condition arose. Instead of eating together they gathered in cliques. The wealthy could bring better food than the poor members. So there was not much opportunity for showing the common love to Christ and to one another. In reproving them for this conduct Paul explained the

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custom of the Christians in observing the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11: 17-34).

The Church has retained the practice of this common meal at which Christ had promised to be present. But it has been found convenient to change it into a mere ceremonial eating and drinking. It ought to be symbolical of our comradeship. It ought to mean to us that we really believe that the present Christ is as real in his spiritual influence as when he gave the bread and wine to his disciples in the Upper Room. It ought to symbolize our common life together.

Food is the most fundamental human need. Can the great human family eat together in comradeship? We have never done it. We have fought over food. We have cheated each other. We have given some far more than was good for them and kept the majority of mankind always hungry.

Can we make the great task of feeding the world a sacramental duty? We have done some wonderful things about food in the War. We have fed the famine-stricken nations. We have denied ourselves that the fighting forces might be supplied and that the civilians in Europe might not suffer. Even now the task of distributing the food over the entire world is engaging the attention of our leaders. Why should we not keep up the same spirit? God gives us the harvest in plenty. Nobody need be in want. No little children anywhere need go hungry. The Great Comrade wants to partake with us of our common meal, but he wants all the comrades to be at the great table.

Think of the practical problems of feeding the world that ought to be faced in a spirit of comradeship which

the world has never yet understood. Would it not be in the highest sense a religious task?

SEVENTH DAY. *Class Discussion.*

Comrade Religion. We have had for our subject this week the development of the early Christian communities as comrade groups. We have seen how they were inspired by the sense of the presence of God, how they grew from city to city, what a new way of living was developed among them with the wonderful love motive, and how they symbolized this in the sacramental meal.

The comrade class might discuss the following questions:

1. What is the influence in the world today of a faith that God is actually working for the comradeship ideals with the same spiritual power that was seen in Christ?
2. Is there any reason to believe that comradeship ideals will grow today as they did in the first century?
3. May we look for such a new hope and faith for the comrade life that it will result in the transformation of personal habits and of political and economic practices?
4. What is the Comrade Way for our day?
5. Is the love motive practical for modern men?
6. How far can the Church, with its solemn acts of worship, help on the comradeship ideal?
7. Is there a revival of comrade religion in the world?

SIXTH WEEK

COMRADE DIFFICULTIES

It is not to be supposed that the first century of the Christian Church was a period of human perfection, to which we are to look back as upon a golden age. Those early comrades of the Gospel were men and women with all the infirmities of human nature with which we are so familiar today. Their experiment in comradeship was beset with difficulties. It will be instructive to us to study the nature of those difficulties and the way they sought to meet them.

FIRST DAY. *The Problem of Old Forms.* There is a certain type of mind which thinks that there is only one way to do a thing, namely, the way in which it has always been done. Such people think that if anything was once true it must always be true, and if anything was once useful it ought not to be displaced. Those who are anxious to make progress are very impatient with these conservative folk. Perhaps neither side fully understands the other.

Christianity was not a new religion in the sense that it was a break with the old Hebrew faith. Jesus and the apostles held the same great spiritual truths that had been experienced by the prophets and the psalmists. In our comrade studies from the Old Testament we felt

that we were studying the same religious ideals that belong to us today.

But there were many forms and ceremonies in old Judaism that did not appeal to the people of the Roman world at all. Especially there was the great religious significance attached to circumcision, a practice which was objectionable to the non-Jewish world. Was this to be required of the Gentiles as a condition of entering the Christian comradeship? We should, of course, answer in the negative without hesitation. Paul made the same answer. But the matter was not so clear to the other Jewish Christians.

We must remember that the Old Testament most plainly required that this rite should be performed, and that as yet there was not a line of the New Testament written. People were accustomed to think of the Bible as a rule of God to be literally obeyed. Naturally, it was difficult for them to take the view that circumcision was an outgrown practice that should be abandoned.

Paul saw that the future of the Church depended upon an amicable settlement of this difficulty. It is always best to talk things over. A conference was therefore held at Jerusalem, the outcome of which was an agreement that the Jewish law should not be binding on the Gentile Christians (Acts 15: 1-35).

In those past controversies we always take the side of the man whose judgment was ultimately approved by the facts. It is no credit to us to be able to decide clearly on a settled question. Everybody knows today that Galileo was right when he said that the earth revolved around the sun. Everyone concedes that the Puritans were justified in coming out of a church which

refused to give them a place in its counsels. Everyone knows that the American colonists were justified in resisting royal tyranny. Everyone knows that the French Revolution was a wonderful forward step in human progress, though everyone deplores the barbarities of the Reign of Terror. But how difficult it was for earnest, honest people to know what was right on these questions at the time! The Bible seemed to be against Galileo, and the unity of the Church against the Puritans, and English destiny in the world against the Colonists, and social order against the French Revolution.

Are there any old forms that are hampering us today? It is easy to destroy but not so easy to build up. We must not lightly give up the practices that have come to us from the past in religion, in politics, in industry, in education. But we must not blindly hold on to what has outgrown its usefulness.

Consider how vital a problem is before us today in keeping contact with the great past, lest we come into the chaos of poor Russia, and in making progress toward a better future, lest we become slaves to such a Junkerism as that of Prussia.

SECOND DAY. *The Problem of Denominationalism.* The conference at Jerusalem did not settle matters as thoroughly as it seemed. The Jewish Christians agreed that the Gentile Christians should not be required to observe circumcision and other practices of the Jewish law. But they did not agree to give up these practices themselves. The result was that there were two kinds of Christians, those who observed the old practices with

great insistence and those who cared nothing for them. They simply agreed to differ. Peter in his kindly enthusiasm thought that the two parties could live and work together; and even that they could eat together. But the Jewish Christians told him that if he wanted to hold fellowship with the Gentiles he could not have fellowship with them. They were perfectly logical in this position, for the Jewish customs forbade fellowship with the Gentiles. Peter found himself in a most difficult situation. Inasmuch as the matter came near to splitting the Galatian church a little later, Paul wrote to that church giving an account of the whole trouble (Gal. 1 and 2).

This was the beginning of denominationalism in the Christian Church. The first two denominations were the Jewish Christian Church and the Gentile Christian Church, and the former felt that it could not have fellowship with the latter. The great leaders were generous minded in the matter, but the rank and file felt very deeply.

It was unfortunate, but it was inevitable. There was a radical difference of view. It was better for these two classes of peoples to worship separately than to quarrel.

We ought not to judge this early separatism too harshly. The people on each side were honest. To us it seems that Paul was the man who saw the great meaning of the issue in all its bearings. But at the time it looked different to a great many men.

This particular denominationalism vanished, but new difficulties arose from time to time, until today we have more than one hundred and seventy different kinds of

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Christians. It has become a scandal and a source of pitiful weakness to the Church and to the gospel of comradeship. Many of us are asking whether the differences that separate the churches are fundamental. Denominationalism has not meant much in France. During the War the differences of the various types of Protestantism have disappeared in the khaki uniform and in the common spirit of service. Moreover, Catholics and Protestants and Jews have worked together and even worshiped together, and have learned to understand one another better in the stress of the great human need.

If there are honest differences of opinion about religious interpretations and practices, we shall not help real comradeship by ignoring such differences. But is there not an opportunity for a much larger unity of those who feel the comrade spirit and believe that the one Great Comrade is calling us to a more generous and united life together?

Consider what can be done to meet the problem of denominationalism in your town.

THIRD DAY. *The Problem of Liberty.* The most passionately demanded human blessing is liberty; the most dangerous human possession is liberty. Germany was so much afraid of liberty that she desired to remove it from the world.

Paul enunciated the doctrine of moral freedom: "Nobody is to tell me what I am to do. Even the sacred scriptures are not a set of rules that I must obey. I must freely decide what is helpful in their practices and suggestions and what in them is out of

date and therefore not useful to me. I am a free son of God and am not to be bound by rules and conventions and the prejudices of the past. I will do what I believe to be right" (see Gal. 5:13—6:10).

This is glorious doctrine but very dangerous. Paul knew that it was dangerous. He therefore insisted that the only man who should dare to live the life of liberty is the man who is so utterly committed to the cause of human comradeship that he will always use his liberty for the highest good.

Liberty is not license. I may not do what I will unless I will what is right. It is only the good man who can be free. Paul says most strikingly that if a man is a slave to his physical passions, to his impulses, he is not fit for liberty. He simply produces "the works of the flesh." A libertine is not free. He only is free who is led by that inner Guide, the Spirit that illuminates and purifies and shows us the meaning of conduct. Such a man brings forth the fruits of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." He brings them forth as freely as the seed brings forth the fruit.

Bolshevism has not made Russia free, because it simply substituted one selfishness for another. Antagonism to capital and toward financial leaders will not make us economically free. A noted labor leader in America said, "When labor gets the power into its own hands I do not know what motive there will be for men to work." That is the problem of liberty. In Russia they have given up work. Evidently only a great industrial comradeship where men work together with such earnest purpose as has characterized much of

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the labor for the needs of war would give us a real economic freedom. It is possible. We can approximate it more and more. It will require a long spiritual education and a ceaseless insistence on comrade ideals. Consider how far human freedom is possible. Have I such a control over myself that I am fit to be free? Do I produce the works of the flesh or the fruits of the Spirit? Do I do my duty because I want to or because I have to? If I could do exactly what I pleased would it be good?

FOURTH DAY. *The Problem of Influence.* That matter of liberty is a comradeship problem. We cannot act as if each of us were alone in the world. We influence one another. I may say that I will do as I please, knowing what is good for myself, but will it be good for others?

This problem arose in the early church over the question of eating meat which had been first presented in a heathen temple. It was customary to make the killing of animals, even for ordinary food purposes, a religious act. It was therefore of necessity connected with idolatry.

That seems to us a trifling matter about which to raise scruples. But we must remember that the problems of one age always seem trifling to a later age, *when they have been solved.*

To the robust conscience of Paul, who was concerned with real righteousness, these little scruples about contact with heathenism were very unimportant. He ate the meat as meat, thanking God for the good food, and simply ignoring the idols as outgrown superstition.

But he was anxious not to have a bad influence on his comrades. If someone saw Paul engaging in what seemed an idolatrous act and was thereby himself led back to the old heathen customs with their superstitions and immoralities, it would be a very unfortunate influence for the apostle to exert. Whenever there was any danger of his conduct being misunderstood, Paul thought it wise to deny himself even a harmless indulgence. He discussed the whole problem in a very high-minded fashion in his letter to the Corinthians (I Cor. 8: 1-13; 10: 23-33).

Perhaps drinking wine and beer involves this problem of influence with us in its most acute form. It cannot be decided on merely personal grounds. Possibly an occasional glass of beer or wine would be quite harmless for you. But what is liquor drinking doing in America? Some of our soldiers have seen the awful conditions of drunkenness in England. That country must meet the drink question or give up its great place in the world.

The prohibition movement in America has grown so rapidly because people have taken the comradeship position of Paul. Have you seriously thought out your own duty in this matter?

What about the young boys in America when we all go home as cigarette smokers? The soldier who has been in France will be a hero to every lad in his town. We know the direful consequences of cigarette smoking in the life of young boys. Can we disregard the question of influence in this matter?

The American Army has become profane. Men say they do not mean anything by it; it has come out of

the stress of war. It has been insisted that the American soldier has no profanity behind his teeth. But he has a lot in front of his teeth. And that is what the young boys at home will hear. There is a question of influence that cannot be ignored.

Shall we face squarely the problem of the influence that our habits are going to exert on the lives of those who, whether we wish it or not, are certain to be influenced by us? This is comradeship with those who follow us.

FIFTH DAY. *The Problem of Wealth and Poverty.* No society has ever progressed very far without developing economic differences among its members. Strangely enough, the only comradeship where no one suffers want unless everybody suffers is found among savages.

The early Christian comrades met the problem of wealth and poverty in the simplest way: the rich divided with the poor (Acts 2: 44, 45; 4: 34-37). Of course this does not settle any fundamental economic problem. It is only a temporary means of meeting a need. But it was the best those people could do, for they had no control of the economic situation.

Some have thought that this experiment in communism was not very fortunate, inasmuch as the Jerusalem church always seems to have been in need. At all events the poverty of the Jerusalem Christians gave Paul an opportunity for a very generous act. We have seen that the Jewish and the Gentile Christians could not agree. Paul would not yield what he believed to be the rights of his Gentile comrades, but he

said to them, "We cannot make the saints in Jerusalem agree with us; we can, however, show them that we love them. They are very poor. Let us raise a sum of money for their assistance from all the Gentile churches." It was a fine act of comradeship, and was very carefully carried out (I Cor. 16: 1-4; II Cor. 8: 1-15; 9: 1-7).

Giving money to those in need is a simple way of meeting the problem of financial inequality. But of course it is not a solution. We are no longer little comrade communities in a hostile world. We are making a world comradeship that controls the whole organization of human life. We have got to face this problem more thoroughly than the New Testament Christians were able to face it.

It should be carefully noted that the New Testament writers did not teach that communism was a Christian duty. It was never practiced except in Jerusalem; and it was not obligatory there. Indeed, it probably continued only during the first enthusiastic days of the founding of the community.

The New Testament comrades did see clearly one phase of the wealth and poverty situation. They saw the abomination of snobbishness (James 2: 1-9) and they realized that there is a certain sense in which we are all equal comrades, worshipers of one God, the Father of us all.

The wealth and poverty problem is before us in the new age for most careful study. Poverty ought to be abolished. It is a disgrace to modern civilization. Some day people will wonder how those who thought themselves civilized and called themselves Christians

permitted slums to exist and children to cry for food.

Bolshevism will not help us. There is no easy way to achieve economic comradeship. It will take our best thinking and most earnest and unselfish efforts. The first question is, Do we want it? Which is the dearest wish of our hearts: to get among the wealthy or to see all America attain a fine economic justice?

SIXTH DAY. *The Problem of Ambition.* We have studied the New Testament comrades enough to realize that they were very much like ourselves. They were not saints of an unearthly character.

In the Christian communities that developed in all the cities of the Roman world there arose the inevitable question of leadership. Who should be the first? Who should hold the offices? Who should receive the highest consideration? There never yet was an organization for human reform but the problem of ambition among the leaders threatened the success of the enterprise.

This rivalry was most marked in Corinth. The Greeks have always been great politicians. Dispute arose particularly as to what kind of leadership in the Church was the most valuable. There were some men who managed the business affairs. Of course they thought they were the most important. The organizers always have a high regard for themselves. Then there were some men who could speak well. Naturally they thought themselves preeminent. Orators are seldom noted for humility. Then there were some who had the ability to heal, and others who could experience religious ecstasy. Each of these considered his peculiar gifts gave him the first place.

Paul discussed the whole question very earnestly, showing that it is the unity of the community group that is important. Every member helps the one body. Of course it must be recognized that those leaders who have ability to build up the life of the group are the most necessary (I Cor. 12).

But if one is really ambitious to be important among his comrades there is one most excellent way of attaining it. It is the way of love. Paul breaks out in his letter into a great praise of love. We ought to know I Cor. 13 by heart. It is the great comrade chapter. The heart of Paul has there found a solution of more human problems than all the philosophies of the world have ever discovered.

It goes back to Jesus' own way of ambition: if you want to be the greatest, do the most service. Can we fire all our ambitions with the comrade spirit of love?

SEVENTH DAY. *Class Discussion.*

The Comrade Solution of Difficulties. We have been studying this week the various problems that arose in the early Christian communities: What were they to do about the past? How were they to live if they had vital disagreements? How could they be free? How could they exert the healthiest influence? How could they bring together the rich and the poor? How should they meet the spirit of ambition? Such problems require a good head and a good heart. They must be sanely thought out and they must be generously met. They are our problems today. They must be solved in the spirit of a great comradeship.

The class might well consider:

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1. In the new age how can the conservatives and the progressives each contribute to the development of real comradeship in all our interests?

2. If we have to have separate parties and separate churches, can we keep the spirit of comradeship? Can we constantly press onward to a union when our differences shall cease to be important?

3. In our development of democracy can we keep liberty under the control of a high moral sense of comrade obligation?

4. In our exercise of liberty can we be sure that we never influence anyone to his own hurt?

5. Can the rich and the poor work together for a better economic comradeship?

6. Can we exalt the dignity of human service so that it will satisfy our highest ambitions to feel that we are doing some good in the world?

7. Is the spirit of comradeship adequate to the solution of our modern problems in our families, our communities, our churches, our industries, our government, our world life?

SEVENTH WEEK

COMRADE IDEALS

FIRST DAY. *The Comrade Spirit.* When we see the kiddies playing games and suddenly come to a halt because Billy won't play unless he can be the captain, we smile at the childish foolishness. That spirit which spoils the children's fun spoils our comradeship all along the line.

"We had to make Smith chairman although he was not the best man, for otherwise he would not have gone in at all." "We had to give Jones the chief part in the play or he would not have taken any part at all."

They had a beautiful comradeship in the church at Philippi. Paul got more satisfaction out of those good people than from any other of his churches. But there was a little danger from this selfish desire for prominence.

Humility does not always seem to us a virtue. It sounds a little weak. Yet the greatest men are humble. It is only little men that push themselves and advertise themselves and elbow others out of the way. The world has seen the blustering bragging of the German leadership with a profound disgust. The supreme egotism of the Kaiser was a joke in every country but his own. There is a greatness in humility.

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Paul told the Philippians to imitate the greatness of Jesus (Phil. 2: 1-11). Jesus had such supreme self-respect that he knew that he belonged with God. But he accepted the humblest place of service. He was a village teacher, a wandering minister to human needs, a faithful comrade of men, though his faithfulness brought him to the death of a criminal. But his is the greatest name in all the records of men. No conquering general, no master of millions, no learned genius, no one is ever put side by side with Jesus. He stands alone and above us all. Yet he never demanded any privilege and never fought for place or glory.

Do you know men of the pushing type who have to be first? Do they contribute very much to the progress of comradeship? Perhaps you can think of actual cases where such men have spoiled good plans.

Do you know men of the quiet, strong, earnest type who are so interested in the work that is to be done that they have not time for personal advertising? Which kind of man do you want to be considered?

SECOND DAY. *Comrade Speech.* Just before the War the German Chancellor called a solemn treaty "a scrap of paper." That cynical phrase will never be forgotten. When Germany hurled its full strength against Verdun in a supreme attempt to break through, Petain said, and the poilus repeated the word, "*Ils ne passeront pas*" (they shall not break through). That sublime phrase will never be forgotten. Words are deeds. Words have set the world on fire. Words have given courage to the downhearted. Words have taken the life and hope out of men.

Two young people were engaged and were looking forward to the happiness of a home together. Unfortunate words were spoken. They separated and two lives were spoiled.

Comrades true as steel to each other went through battle together, shared common dangers, helped each other in dire emergency. One day a careless word was said. A sharp reply followed it. Words that could not be taken back came quickly. Today the friendship is broken.

A young boy from a good home heard some foul words that were new to him. He listened, fascinated by the secret and the forbidden. The words were seeds of evil in his mind. He is a coarse, vulgar fellow today.

They knew the danger of the tongue in that early comradeship of the New Testament. Earnest and serious is the warning concerning this unruly member (James 3: 1-12).

Words are angels or devils. Kind words, generous words, encouraging words, cheerful words, high words of idealism—what a value these have for us! But angry words, spiteful words, jeering words, discouraging words, profane words, filthy words—how they tear down all that is good!

What kind of speech are we going to take back from France to America? What ought to be the talk of Comrades in Service?

THIRD DAY. *Comrade Thoughts.* Behind speech is thought. The man who thinks good thoughts does not speak evil words. To be sure, we do sometimes let a

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word slip foolishly which does not represent our real thinking and which we wish we could recall. That is part of the problem of controlling the tongue. Yet in general our words represent our thoughts.

The power of thought is very wonderful. In a moment we can live again in some past scene. How often we shall recall in imagination some of the never-to-be-forgotten days of this war. How often during the war, in the cold misery of the trenches, in those terrible moments before the attack, thought winged its way across the sea to the home, to the loved ones.

In thought we can construct a world for ourselves. Who has not spent hours picturing a happy, glorious future? We call these day dreams. Then there are more serious thoughts, when we really plan what we are going to do. These are the test of a man. There are thoughts when we grapple with life's problems, asking ourselves difficult questions and trying to answer them. Every man ought to have thoughts like these. They are mental gymnastics, keeping his mind active, alert, keen. Then there are thoughts in dangerous realms. We can think of things that we dare not do. We can think of indulgences that are not for honest men. Thought can go anywhere.

Paul urged his comrades to good thinking (Phil. 4: 8, 9). He knew the healthy consequences of thinking on subjects high, true, pure, beautiful, generous.

Our difficulties begin in our thinking. Our temptations are not sent to us. They arise out of the very thoughts and desires of our hearts (James 1: 13-15).

We can lay the basis of our comradeship in our thinking. That most important relationship of a man's

life, his whole attitude toward women, depends on whether he accustoms himself to thinking of women with the chivalry with which he thinks of his sister and of his honored friends, or whether he allows himself to think of women as simply incidental to his pleasure (Matt. 5: 27, 28).

The hope of a better comrade life in America lies in our thinking. As we plan for the future are we thinking how we are going to live together in the fine spirit of justice, in mutual happiness and prosperity, or are our thoughts only toward personal and selfish advantage? We need more day dreams of human comradeship.

The dream of the League of Nations which has been the imagination of idealists for centuries may become a practical reality today. But it has come out of the comrade thinking of the past.

Spend a few moments on this question; What is my thought life?

FOURTH DAY. *Comrade Traditions.* Goodness sometimes seems to be lonely. We think that the world has always been selfish, evil, quarrelsome. We speak of "human nature" with something of apology, as if we all recognized that it was not very good. So this hope of comradeship may seem to be nothing but an idle dream.

Such a mood may be natural, but it is not just. Goodness is nothing new. The world has been rich in heroism, in unselfishness, in love, in honor, in honorable men and gracious women. Comradeship is nothing new. There have been wonderful comradeships in the

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days gone by. The traditions of the heroic past ought to be kept fresh in all our minds. We ought to know more about the men and women who founded America, the pioneers who opened up the wilderness, the wonderful women whose faithfulness to duty in the farm-houses and in the homes of America made possible our national life. We ought to know more about the men who built the railroads, who discovered the mineral wealth, who carried the common school and the little church across the continent. We have a rich heritage of noble traditions.

Some of the early Christian comrades were getting a bit discouraged, thinking their lot was hard and that they had a lonely task. One of their leaders made them a picture. He drew before their imagination a great race-track with the runners stripped for the contest. Then he showed the vast grandstand filled with spectators. Who are these who look down upon us from the benches? They are the heroes of the past (Heb. 11). We must run our race with the consciousness that these men and women who did their duty are looking on, expecting us to do ours (Heb. 12: 1, 2).

It is probably no exaggeration to believe that the era upon which we are just entering is going to be as important in the history of the world as any era since civilization began. There is more resolution to make a better human life than ever before. But the new age will not come of itself. It may be that these high hopes will all vanish in ordinary sordid selfishness.

Great souls of the past longed for such a day as ours. They worked under enormous difficulties to bring it about. Consider how every little liberty and justice

had to be fought for. Are we going to be true to the noble struggles of the past and the wonderful possibilities of our day?

Think of some of the men and women who built up your own town. Think of some of the attempts which they made to develop a better comradeship there. Can you help to get some things done which it was impossible to do in their day?

FIFTH DAY. *Practical Living.* There was nothing unnatural about that early Christian comradeship. Some people think that if you "get religion" you suddenly assume a solemn attitude toward everything and everybody. Comradeship with God and comradeship with men is the most natural, joyous, free manner of life that is possible. There may be wonderful transformation, but that is because one sees so many good things that he never saw before. It is like the experience of a boy when he finds out what education means, of a young man when he finds himself absorbed by a pure love for a good girl whom he wants to make his wife, of one who gets into the business which really calls out his best powers. We just live at our best, that is all.

Paul wanted the Roman Christians to realize what a practical kind of life the new comradeship called for. So he gave them a list of definite suggestions (Rom. 12: 1, 2, 9-21). Love, which is nothing but the comrade spirit, occupies a prominent place. Hard work is not forgotten. Lending a hand, hospitality, sympathy with the joys and the sorrows of others, are all mentioned. The treatment of the enemy comes in again, for that is where our comradeship so easily ends. We must get

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away from revenge toward national enemies and personal enemies. This list is only suggestive. Each of us can add something from his own experience. It might be a profitable exercise to make a little inventory of one's own practices and test them on the comradeship scale. What kind of a comrade am I with God? Do we really live together? What kind of a comrade do my friends find me? How is my team work in business? How many people in need or in trouble have found me a comrade? What about the people whom I do not like? Do I ever win any of them, or do I just pay them back evil for evil?

It is not wise to spend very much time thinking about ourselves. But once in a while it is not a bad plan to take the comrade rule and measure our practical life by it. The twelfth chapter of Romans makes a good test.

SIXTH DAY. *World Comradeship.* The world has never believed in comradeship. National unity has been achieved, but a world order has always seemed impossible. To be sure, the great empires of Greece and Rome tried to unite the world under one government. But that was an autocratic attempt and therefore doomed to failure. The vain dream of William II was of the same nature.

But there must be a world comradeship if we are to have peace, and if the nations are to live side by side in mutual helpfulness. Hitherto national jealousy and prejudice have made a world peace impossible. The question before the peoples today is whether they can rise above these old limitations.

If ever a people had cause for national prejudice it

was the Jews. They had been oppressed by tyrants for centuries. Unable to get rid of the Gentile, they had at least been able to hate him. Their dearest religious hope was that God would send them a deliverer to destroy their enemies and to give them the leadership of the world.

Could the Jews believe in world comradeship? Paul got a vision of a universal religion, in which there should be no differences of race, or class, or sex. He saw a great human unity in the spirit of Jesus (Gal. 3: 28).

This seemed to Paul to be the supreme purpose to which all the purposes of God were moving forward. The breaking down of the wall of partition that separated men seemed to him to be the great achievement of Christ. With wonderful sweep of imagination he sees a world unity (Eph. 2: 11-3: 21).

We do not expect to give up nationalism. If we can develop a healthy comrade life in our great America for one hundred and fifty millions or two hundred millions or more of people we shall make a great success. But nationalism is not necessarily narrow, prejudiced, quarrelsome. We have fought side by side with the English, the Scotch, the Irish, the Welsh, the Canadians, the Australians, the New Zealanders, the French, the Belgians, the Italians, the Portuguese, the Serbians, and a dozen other peoples. We chose a supreme general and worked as one great military force under his command. Let us carry that comradeship into the peace.

The League of Nations is the comradeship ideal of today. Nothing must be allowed to spoil it. Our

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statesmen must find the way out of all difficulties. Some day, when Germany has atoned for her crimes, she too must join the League. We must have a world comradeship, believing that the good of one is the good of all. Do you find this to be a religious hope, something in which you can believe and for which you can pray? Think of that question.

SEVENTH DAY. *Class Discussion.*

The Idealism of Comradeship. We sometimes hear men speak sneeringly of idealism as if it were something hazy and unpractical. As a matter of fact, all the good that is ever done in the world is by the realization of ideals. Men first see something good in imagination and then strive to achieve it. Let a man cherish his ideals and develop nobler ideals.

We have studied this week some of the comrade efforts that a man will make to realize the comradeship ideal when it has really captured his imagination. He will be so much concerned with the good that is to be accomplished that he will not waste his strength in seeking personal honor. He will be most careful not to spoil the comrade enterprise by foolish or wicked speech or by idle or evil thought. He will realize that all the good of the past is demanding that he be a worthy comrade in the present and a maker of the greater future. He will work out his comrade life in all the practical details of daily duty. He will include the world in his faith, refusing to stop at anything short of a genuine comradeship among all men. The class may consider:

1. In our lodges, unions, churches, politics can we keep the work that is to be done so prominently before

us that men will be lifted above petty ambition? How can we get a vigorous leadership and yet keep a genuine modesty?

2. Can we speak with freedom and never do harm by our words?

3. Can we think the thoughts that will produce the deeds which the world needs?

4. How can we use the memory of the past to keep us true to the high calls of today?

5. In what practical ways can we develop comradeship?

6. Can comradeship be extended to include the world?

7. What is the value of ideals in human life?

IV

THE COMRADE HOPE

EIGHTH WEEK

THE COMRADE HOPE

FIRST DAY. *The Experience of the Risen Comrade.*
A vital hope runs all through the New Testament. Death, the great enemy of men, has ceased to be feared. Confidence in continued life and in victorious life produces a new joy.

Central in this great hope was a great experience. Paul, who had never seen Jesus in the flesh, believed that he saw him on the road to Damascus, and the experience made him a disciple. The other apostles and many of their comrades had had like experiences, so that to them Jesus was ever thought of as a living, present Friend.

But Jesus had always told his comrades that they could share all his experiences. If therefore he had passed through death and was living still, then they could follow him.

To be sure, there were those who raised difficulties. It is easy to ask difficult questions about the life after death. Some wanted to know what kind of body we would have. The Greeks were particularly concerned about these questions, so Paul wrote to them very fully on the subject (I Cor. 15).

He told them that in a wonderful world like ours, where there are innumerable forms of life, we need

not be disturbed about discussing the particular form which the human spirit could take after death. Of course this physical body is not eternal, but there is an incorruptible and immortal humanity which cannot be destroyed by death and cannot perish in the grave.

It has sometimes been thought that religion has concerned itself too much with the future life. Our hymns have been very largely about death and heaven. In our own day we have had a healthy reaction towards a religion of comradeship that should be lived here and now. But the emphasis upon the great value of this life need not deprive us of the hope for the life beyond. Sixty thousand young Americans have died in their early youth devoted to a great cause. But they are living still. Many of them died with the comfort of that great hope in their hearts.

Would not you find it good to believe in a Christ who has gone before us through the dread experience of death and who has revealed to us that beyond the darkness there is light?

SECOND DAY. *The Experience of Unbroken Comradeship.* Most of us never realize the richness of experience that might be ours. The companionship of God through Christ may be an abiding joy and comfort and help. By virtue of this comradeship and in spite of extraordinary difficulties Paul lived in a way that can only be called victorious. We have already studied the eighth chapter of Romans for one purpose. Read again verses 28-39 and note how they reveal the great hope which animates this man of intense practical activity.

He is not dismayed by circumstances. He believes that everything may be turned to the advantage of the man who loves God. He does not say that everything happens for the best. He does not suggest that everything is done as God wills it. But he does insist that every circumstance may become a help if it is taken in the right way in the comradeship of God.

Paul's hope of the future has a wonderful moral quality. He sees progress before each of us with no less a destiny than to become like Christ. "Conformed to the image of God's Son." That suggests an answer to one of the most difficult questions about a future life. We often wonder whether we are worth preserving forever. Certainly not, as we are. But we have in us the capacity of eternal growth. Christ lived a life that was worth preserving. I am going to be like Christ. I have a long way to go, but I am on the way.

Then Paul says the Great Comrade becomes the champion. Who has any charge to bring against me? Christ is my champion. He speaks for me. I am not afraid of the future because I belong to him.

And nothing can separate me from him. This comradeship is so real, the comradeship with the living God whom I know in Jesus Christ, that nothing can break it. No calamity or circumstance of life can break it; and death cannot touch it at all.

If this experience is real, it is infinitely important. To go about our work with this conquering sense that nothing can hurt us would be a wonderful comfort and strength. It would banish worry, overcome pessimism, deliver us from fear, inspire us to do our very best work, and give us genuine, abiding happiness.

There is nothing morbid about this experience. It is not a looking forward to death. It is a life so rich and full that it simply disregards death, looking beyond it to more life. It is compatible with the most intense interest in this world, with all its beauty, all its work, and all its problems. It simply links a great future with this present and sees them as an unbroken unity.

Our human comradeship ought to be dignified by this great hope. If we are all going on with Christ we ought to live together as those with such a destiny.

Think of the great value which this hope gives to human nature. Do you esteem yourself highly enough? Do you esteem your comrades as the sons of God?

THIRD DAY. *The Experience of the Weakening Body.* The most wonderful machine on earth is the human body. It has the power to repair itself for eighty or ninety years. But it is a most delicate machine. When it is out of order the human personality is in a sorry state.

The terrible engines of war have played havoc with the intricate machinery of man's physical organism. A hospital is a wonderful repair shop, but sometimes it can only patch up a badly shattered frame. We have all seen what sickness and wounds have done to strong, vigorous men.

We must face this fact that we are physical organisms. All that we can do in this world depends upon the ability of this body to play its part. We have rightly, therefore, put great emphasis on physical culture and hygienic living. But what shall we do when physical strength fails us? A sick-bed makes a man think. It

brings him an experience of the meaning of things that he never gets in health.

Paul faced this problem when a very severe illness, perhaps complicated with ill treatment from his enemies, brought him to the point of death. Writing soon after to the Corinthian church, he gave them the account of what he had gone through (II Cor. 4: 7-5: 10).

He uses some very striking figures. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." It is as if a man were carrying a most costly liquid in a brittle jar. If that piece of pottery cracks or breaks, the valuable contents are gone. Our thoughts, our hopes, our ideals, our heroisms, our Godlike possibilities, are in these bodies. The least infection, the merest accident, may end the physical capacity.

But there is another figure. Every soldier knows the difference between the old tent and the good house, between the bivouac at the front and the comfortable home in the leave area. Paul says we are living in tents, "the earthly house of this tabernacle" (tent). The ropes grow old, the stakes get loose, the canvas weakens and tears. What is the human personality to do when its tent is no longer habitable? "We have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

We enjoy life in these wonderful bodies. All our plans of earthly comradeship must be worked out in the body. It is our duty to care for our own bodies and for the bodies of others, that they may be well fed, well clothed, well housed, the minds trained, and the whole personality developed.

But when the body weakens it is only the closing

of one chapter and the opening of another. "The things that are not seen are eternal."

Think over the naturalness of the experience which Paul expresses in this letter. What larger meaning does it give to human life?

FOURTH DAY. *The Comrade Promise.* There are ten short phrases that have probably given more comfort to human hearts than any other words that ever were spoken. They were said in less than a minute: they contain the hope of eternity. To his troubled comrades, dreading the loneliness without a leader, Jesus addressed the immortal comrade promise (John 14: 1-3).

We are dismayed when our leaders go from us. What a terrible misfortune for the South as well as for the North, for the Negro as well as for the white man, when Lincoln was taken away. What a tragic hour that was in the Great War when the news of Kitchener's death startled the world. The leader was gone.

But Jesus told his comrades that it was not a misfortune for him to be taken from them. He knew whither he was going. He knew that beyond the darkness there was light. He promised to come back to take his comrades into the larger life which he himself was about to enter.

Jesus always spoke in pictures and parables. How can one describe the unseen except in symbol? So he spoke of the many dwelling places in the Father's House. There is plenty of room. He promises to see that there is a place for each of us.

There are a great many of us. Sometimes our faith in God's care is staggered because we cannot see how

he can know us all. One gets lost in the hundreds of millions of the human family.

But there is plenty of room in God's House, and there is plenty of room in God's heart. "He calleth us all by name."

This religious faith is very personal. The Great Comrade does not march at the head of an army; he walks by our side. We talk together. We work together. He helps us in our troubles. He shows us our duties. He teaches us the lessons of comradeship with other men. Some day when the time comes he will walk with us to the point where the physical life reaches its end and then we shall go on into something that he has prepared for us, and we shall find a new life, a new world, a new richness of experience that will be infinitely satisfying.

It was a long time before Jesus called for most of the disciples. They had serious comrade work to do. But they never forgot his promise. It made all their work more significant.

Think how the comrade promise gives completeness to all our goodly plans as comrades in service. Would there not be a sad lack if we could not put that at the end of our efforts?

FIFTH DAY. *The Suicide of Selfishness.* All these comrade hopes and plans may be spoiled. God's gracious purpose for men may fail. We may be guilty of the suicide of selfishness. If we will not enter into the comradeship we shall not be forced to enter, but we shall lose the good that it would bring.

The book of Revelation, which is rather difficult to

understand in many of its details, is very simple in its main teaching. It is a most interesting portrayal of the victory of righteousness and of the suicide of selfishness. The Roman Empire was trying to destroy the Christian Church. The great selfish world power was afraid of the comrade communities that were growing up in every city. Autocracy today is afraid of the democratic comrade spirit that is growing in the world. Germany was afraid of it and launched the awful War to bring the world under the sway of imperial power.

The conflict between Rome and Christianity was an unequal one. Rome had all the power. The Christians had only faith and patience. The book of Revelation is a dramatic picture of the contest. It was not safe to write openly against the imperial power. The author, therefore, used expressions which only the Christians would understand. They spoke of Babylon when they meant Rome. They used mysterious symbols to express the forces engaged in conflict.

The essence of this book of visions is that the seer saw the wicked tyrant destroyed and God dwelling with his people. Read the vivid description of the fall of Rome (Rev. 18: 4—19: 6).

The comrade hope includes this destructive element. It would not be a righteous hope unless it recognized the suicide of selfishness as well as the victory of life.

The fall of Germany, of Austria, of Turkey, ought to be a solemn lesson to the world. They fell because deliberately they chose ruthless self-aggrandizement and sneered at the obligations of humanity. The world at last rose against them, horrified at such an exhibition of cruelty and greed.

The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Every institution in this world that is against comradeship is doomed. Every class, or party, or church, or economic institution, that opposes world comradeship is preparing the way for its own ruin.

The comrade hope is not the salvation of individual men in another world. It is the achievement here of a human comradeship which is so good that it can be continued and improved in another world. Is there anything in any institution to which you belong which is against this plan of God? Is there anything in your own life of ambition which is inconsistent with this great attainment? Think of the suicide of selfishness.

SIXTH DAY. *Comrade Triumph*. The New Testament closes with a climax of joy. The book of Revelation, which, as we have seen, presents the suicide of selfishness, ends with the victory of comradeship, "the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people" (Rev. 21: 1-11, 21-27; 22: 1-5).

Again it is seen in a picture. The beautiful vision is a city. A city is where men dwell together, work together, have a supreme opportunity to achieve a human comradeship. God is in that city. Its gates are open for all to come. Yet nothing vile or false ever enters. It cannot; it would not be at home; it would find no place to stay. Men and women live there who have learned how to live, and God lives there as their friend.

We are at first surprised to learn that there is no church in that city of the vision. The purpose of the church has been achieved. The church takes a sacred

day, sacred books, sacred ceremonies, and seeks through them to teach men that all life is sacred. In that city of the vision men have learned the lesson. All life has become worship. Every act has become sacramental. Every thought is prayer.

Is the vision for this world or for heaven? It seems to be for both. It is an ideal, of course. It is the hope for this life and also for the life which is to come.

We shall not reach the ideal in a day. Very much is to be done before life becomes so strong and pure and natural. But the hope sustains us. It is going to be a victory of comradeship in this old world. Each of us may do his part. We shall die before it fully comes—

“That far off divine event
To which the whole creation moves.”

But we shall not cease to have our part in it. The great comradeship ideal goes on in a life that is after death, and we may share it if we will. Surely this is a very practical faith. “Everyone that hath this hope . . . purifieth himself” (I John 3: 3).

The writers of the New Testament were very practical. Their sublime hopes helped them to live the life of each day. Consider whether these noble ideals may help us in our own common tasks, our own difficulties and temptations, our own definite plans of human service.

SEVENTH DAY. *Class Discussion.*

The Optimism of Comradeship. We have studied this week the great optimism of the New Testament. The

disciples believed that their Lord was with them, they lived victoriously with the Unseen Comrade, they were not dismayed by the weakening body, they held the promise of eternal life, they believed in the solemn doom of selfishness, they looked for the vindication of righteousness in this world and in a better world that is to come.

1. Is optimism justified by all the facts that we know?

2. What does God really do for us in this world?

3. What may we believe that God will do for us in the future?

4. What is the relation of the human personality to the physical body?

5. Is the experience of Christ any encouragement to us?

6. What reason have we for believing that wickedness will destroy itself?

7. What basis is there for believing in unending progress and eternal hope?

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